

MISTAKES OF INGERSOLL.

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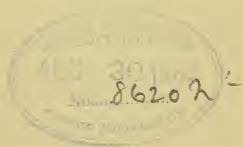


MISTAKES OF INGERSOLL.

BY

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MISTAKES OF INGERSOLL.

CHAPTER I.

COL. ROBERT G. INGERSOLL proclaims that he has discovered a multitude of mistakes made by Moses. I will prove upon him more and greater mistakes than he charges, but does not prove, upon Moses.

Moses says that God created the heavens and the earth and all that they contain. Col. Ingersoll says there is no God. He says, "The universe, according to my idea, is, always was, and forever will be. It did not come into being—it is the one eternal being—the only thing that ever did, does, or can exist."

While the human intellect cannot grasp the idea of a thing without a beginning, it is obliged to accept one or the other of these. If Moses tells the truth, we have a ready and satisfactory explanation of the origin of all that we see, and especially of the origin of man. If Col. Ingersoll's idea does not afford an equally easy and satisfactory explanation of all these things, it must of necessity be rejected, and all that its advocates can urge in its support must be mistakes.

There is not perhaps in the whole world another example in which a man claiming to be intelligent attempts

to impose upon intelligent people, as evidence, or argument, or common sense, such a tissue of nonsense, such a mass of extravagant assertion without proof, and such gross and palpable absurdities as constitute the staple of his effort to establish the truth of his hypothesis. He says the universe always existed, and claims that nature does all the rest, whatever that may be.

Let us group together what appear to be his strong arguments against the existence of a God and in support of his hypothesis—separated from his abuse and attempts at ridicule of God, and his professions of love of liberty, justice, free thought, free speech, etc., which of course have nothing to do with the question. “Beyond nature man cannot go, even in thought—above nature he cannot rise—below nature he cannot fall.”

“A deity outside of nature exists in nothing, and is nothing.”

“Nature is but an endless series of efficient causes. She cannot create, but she eternally transforms. There was no beginning, and there can be no end.”

“Nature, so far as we can discover, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever.”

He believes he “came up from the lower animals.” It is not likely that anybody will dispute that point with him, as it is a matter personal to himself, and perhaps his inner consciousness, if he has any, furnishes him evidence not vouchsafed to those who believe they are descended from a higher parentage. He certainly furnishes pretty good evidence of the truth of his belief, in the distinctive traits of the wild beasts exhibited in the blind

and savage ferocity with which he assaults God, the Bible, and Christianity. If his lectures have failed to produce the conviction that he "came up from the lower animals," they have convinced multitudes that he is rapidly gravitating down to them.

He says, "I believe that man came up from the lower animals. I do not say this as a fact. I simply say I believe it to be a fact. . . . After thinking it all over, I came to the conclusion that I liked the doctrine. I became convinced in spite of myself. . . . After all, I had rather belong to a race that started from the skullless vertebrates in the dim Laurentian seas—vertebrates wiggling without knowing why they wiggled, and swimming without knowing where they were going, but that in some way began to develop, and began to get a little higher and a little higher in the scale of existence; that came up by degrees through all that crawls and swims and floats and climbs and walks, and finally produced the gentleman in the dugout— . . . I would rather belong to that race that commenced a skullless vertebrate and finally produced Shakespeare—a race that has before it an infinite future, with the angel of progress leaning from the far horizon beckoning men forward, upward, and onward forever—I had rather belong to such a race, commencing there, producing this, and with that hope, than to have sprung from a perfect pair upon which the Lord has been losing money every moment from that day to this."

"I have given you my honest thoughts."

These are fine brave words, very pretty talk, and highly complimentary to Col. Ingersoll's "skullless, crawling,

swimming, floating, climbing and walking" ancestors. And it is with such stuff as this that he is insane enough to believe that he can convince sensible people that there is no God !

It might have a little more of the semblance of plausibility if he had shown us how the skulless vertebrates came in the dim Laurentian seas, and explained how, by wiggling, swimming, floating, climbing, and walking, they got up to be the great Col. Ingersoll, or even Shakespeare.

But, after all, it is doubtful if even Shakespeare, if he were alive, would be proud of the pedigree which Col. Ingersoll has made for him, even with the great honor of kinship to Col. Ingersoll thrown in.

Shakespeare would probably say, "Look here, Col. Ingersoll, please don't include me in that race ; for ' blood will tell,' and though your character may place you out of the reach of injury from the association, I am afraid that mine may not be good enough to protect me. According to your doctrine, we must all be descended, or, to use your words, must have ' come up ' from the monkey and the negro, as the missing link between the man and the brute is between them. Now I don't know but the monkey and negro blood may be as good as any ; in truth you believe it is the only blood, and therefore the best ; but, as I believe in a God who created the white race superior to the monkey and even to the negro, I confess I have a preference for a descent from the superior race. Besides, it is said that where there is even a very small mixture of negro blood it is in its nature so rich and strong that, after having apparently disappeared for sev-

eral generations, it sometimes suddenly crops out and reverts back to the pure negro. If this be true, it may well be asserted that 'blood will tell;' and though there may be no danger of the occurrence of such a thing in my case, or even in yours; and though it may be a weakness in me to indulge such a feeling, I confess that I would not like to live and die under the fear of the bare possibility that my descendants might turn into negroes, and even into monkeys. So, my dear Colonel, I will, with your permission, stick to the race which, in my opinion, is indebted for its origin to a higher source than the 'skulless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas,' and I will be obliged to you if, in the next edition you print of your book, you will leave me out as one of the products of your race. I confess I would rather be considered as having sprung from 'a perfect pair,' however much 'the Lord has lost' upon me. In saying this I am only exercising my right of free thought and free speech without, you say man is an abject slave, without intending to reflect upon your taste or intelligence, if, differing with me, you should, 'after thinking it all over, come to the conclusion that you like the idea' of getting back to the pure rich African blood, an infusion of which, it is said that Mr. Sumner thought, would be a great improvement to the white race."

CHAPTER II.

It appears that Col. Ingersoll is not the first to say "There is no God." It is reported that several thousands of years ago there was another fellow who "said in his heart" the same thing, whether he said it anywhere else we are not informed.

Ever since there have occasionally started up some of the same sort, "who, like Theudas, boasted themselves to be somebody," but all along the great majority of the people, including those of the greatest intellects, the purest lives, the most exalted characters, and the grandest achievements in all the departments of life, have entertained and reverently cherished the belief in the existence of a God of creation.

If there is or has been any man remarkable for those exalted qualities of head and heart which dignify and elevate humanity, and command the admiration and respect, and secure the love, of his fellow-beings, and who believed there is no God, his name has not come to my knowledge or has escaped my memory.

It is not only the unquestionable right, but the paramount duty, of every man to think, to investigate, and to determine for himself upon all matters vitally affecting his own interest and that of the human race ; but before he undertakes to denounce, as not only erroneous, but destructive of the rights and interests of the whole of man-

kind, opinions on subjects of vital importance to the race, opinions which have been held and acted upon by the best and the wisest of the men of all ages, he ought at least to be thoroughly convinced of one of two things, either that he is superior to all of them in honesty and intellect, or that, by some happy chance, he has discovered some new evidence of their error which had escaped their scrutiny—evidence too clear to be mistaken or misunderstood, and too strong to be resisted.

By which of these convictions Col. Ingersoll has been influenced to undertake to eradicate from the human mind the belief in the existence of a God of creation I shall not take upon me to decide, though I suppose it must be the first, for no honest man with intelligence enough to entitle him to sit upon a jury in a justice's court could, upon a full and impartial examination of all that he has said and written, fail to decide that he has not introduced a particle of evidence either new or old, or advanced anything approaching sound argument in support of his position.

Partial insanity often exhibits itself in the form of excessive vanity. Seeing that he has exhausted his powers of eulogy upon Bacon, Shakespeare, Voltaire, and Paine—all professed and open believers in the existence of a God of creation—the virtual assumption of superiority in honesty and intellect to all of these and all others of the same belief, savors strongly of an excess of vanity amounting to at least partial insanity. Whether vanity has produced the insanity or insanity has produced the vanity, is a question scarcely worth the trouble of an attempt to solve.

He professes to consider the belief that there is or ever was a God of omnipotence who created all things wholly opposed to his reason, whatever that may be, but he has somehow managed, by the exercise of what he defines as "that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance called faith," to produce upon his own mind the conviction that the universe existed from eternity, and therefore was not created, and that nature has been managing every thing ; how long he does not tell us. But what nature is, how she came into existence, or whence she derived her great powers, he seems not to have discovered, or if he has, he has not thought proper to inform us.

He attributes to ignorance and superstition the belief in God, the Bible, and Christianity, which he says has for ages held and is still holding the world in degrading bondage and abject slavery ; and, judging from his professions of interest in the welfare and happiness and sympathy for the sufferings of his fellow-beings, simple-minded people might be led to the conclusion that from pure benevolence and philanthropy he had resolved to dispel, by the clear and pure light of unadulterated truth, the dark clouds of ignorance and thick mists of superstition by which he says the people have been so long and so fatally held in degrading bondage, and to lift them to the broad and elevated plane of intelligence and liberty which he claims to have reached.

And such conclusion might be correct—perhaps. But there are those people who claim to understand "the ways that are dark and the tricks that are vain," and who think they are shrewd enough to have discovered that he is not more than half as crazy as his lectures would induce

sensible, unsuspecting people to consider him, and uncharitable enough to indulge the suspicion that the half-dollars which are said to have flowed so abundantly into his coffers from his lectures have exerted no small influence in quickening his benevolent and philanthropic feelings into life and activity.

I express no opinion save that—whether he is whole or only half crazy, there is upon the money question at least a deal of “method in his madness.”

CHAPTER III.

As Col. Ingersoll appears to be possessed by a frantic desire and a determined purpose to destroy the Christian religion, as the greatest curse ever inflicted upon the world, he was wise to commence with the effort to prove that there is no God of creation ; for unless he can succeed in this, all his assumed absurdities and impossibilities, which he asserts are its only supports, and upon which he relies for its destruction, vanish ; and his goddess nature takes a subordinate position, and, instead of serving as a useful ally, becomes a potent adversary.

In view of the number and the violence of the efforts for the destruction of Christianity, in every age and country, and by every grade of intellect, and the unsavory memories left by the assailants upon every foot of the road they have traveled, Col. Ingersoll, in undertaking to travel the same road, exhibits (to use a somewhat stale comparison) all the heroism, as well as the discretion, of the little bob-tailed bull that, in his rage and confidence, and, it may be added, his ignorance, squared himself for a fight with the locomotive ; but the bull was more excusable for his want of discretion than Col. Ingersoll, because he had not been warned by the fate of his predecessors.

But the world has never been wanting in heroes or madmen who will take any hazard and make any sacri-

fice for what they consider glory, or even for notoriety or the hope of gain. To their imaginations there are no impossibilities in their paths. The failure of others will but add to the glory of their success; every new adventurer sees the cause of all past failures in the want of some new element of success, which his genius has enabled him to discover.

Generally, such men profess to be governed by an overmastering desire to confer some great good upon mankind, and to be sustained by the clearest conviction that the accomplishment of their purposes will produce that result and get great glory to themselves. Guiteau claims that God had ordered him to kill Garfield, to save the country from destruction. Col. Ingersoll believes that he will confer inestimable blessings upon the world by killing God, the Bible, and Christianity. Which of the two betrays the strongest symptoms of insanity I will not undertake to determine, but certainly there was much less of method in Guiteau's madness than in Col. Ingersoll's; for unless Guiteau was hopelessly insane, he was obliged to know that the accomplishment of his purpose would, in all probability, consign his body to the gallows and his name to infamy, and that the best that he could hope for in any event would be a cell in the insane asylum; while Col. Ingersoll, in the pursuit of his benevolent purposes, incurs no personal hazard; and, as if having some lingering doubts as to the success of his efforts, has been careful to gather up all the half-dollars that came in the way, so that if his labors result in no good to anybody else, they have availed to fill his own pockets.

Some people appear to have come to the conclusion that they can see great benefits that have already resulted to the country from the death of President Garfield. Such people ought to accept Guiteau's claim of Divine inspiration, and consider him as a patriot at heart instead of wanting him hung. It may be, too, that there are those who believe that Col. Ingersoll will render the world great service by destroying God, the Bible, and Christianity. I am not able to perceive anything but evil as the result of Guiteau's act ; and the little reason I possess does not enable me to discover, nor have I imagination enough to conceive of, any benefits that would accrue to the world from Col. Ingersoll's success in his purposes. But perhaps he may fail ; others have.

CHAPTER IV.

DOUBTLESS Col. Ingersoll attributes the failure of such intellects as Gibbon, Hume, Voltaire, and Paine in their efforts to destroy Christianity to their want of the good fortune of having, as he has, reached that exalted state of intelligence to which nature has elevated him, and which would have given them the knowledge that they, like him, had been by the plastic hand of nature wrought out of the "skulless vertebrates in the dim Laurentian seas—vertebrates wiggling without knowing why they wiggled, and swimming without knowing where they were going," and which would also have informed them that the almost universal belief of mankind in all ages in the existence of a creator of the universe was the offspring of ignorance and superstition, and an outrage upon reason and common sense. And probably it is now with him a matter of great self-gratulation, that to the infallibility of his great intellect has been reserved the honor of discovering these things, and that to its irresistible power will be awarded the glory of eradicating from the minds of all men the belief in the existence of a God of creation, and thereby preparing his way to an easy victory in his war upon Christianity.

Judging from his lectures it would probably be safe to conclude that there is no other living man endowed at once with so many of the qualities likely to induce him to

engage in such an enterprise, and so many that are calculated to insure defeat.

It is not surprising that Col. Ingersoll's lectures should have produced a sensation, delivered as they have been all over the country by a man said to have been pronounced by Henry Ward Beecher "the greatest living orator speaking the English language." Entertaining no "decent respect for the opinions of mankind," holding nothing too sacred for a jest or a sneer, no assertion too bold to be made, and nothing too absurd to advocate provided it will raise a laugh and bring in the half-dollars, there is no doubt that some unthinking people who seek amusement from his lectures, and who do not trouble themselves to examine closely the matter of the speech provided the manner affords amusement, have received the impression that Col. Ingersoll has made some strong points against the existence of a God of creation. But the impartial and intelligent inquirers after truth will, upon a careful examination of his lectures, be surprised to find how little there is having any real bearing upon the question, and how much of that little is opposed to his positions. He will find them made up chiefly of bold assertions unsustained by proof, rough jokes, vulgar witticisms, broad caricature, and violent denunciation, and that when he professes to reason his conclusions are drawn from unadmitted and unestablished premises, and that both are often contradictory, for he never fails to say what he thinks will please the crowd. He will find him, too, blest with a happy confusion of intellect, which renders him incapable of perceiving the inconsistencies and absurdities in which he so often involves himself, and

which furnishes him with the most striking analogies in very slight resemblances, as the Irishman in the rabbit-hunt, on finding a jackass, pronounced him the father of rabbits from the length of his ears.

Col. Ingersoll is not only mighty, but reckless, in assertion; in truth, that is his forte; and just here I will present one illustration of his genius in that line. In one of his writings he says: "Certain it is that Jefferson could not have written anything so manly, so striking, so comprehensive, so clear, so convincing, and so faultless in rhetoric and rhythm as the Declaration of Independence." In the face of this, no surprise will be created by any assertion, however absurd and unfounded; and the careful, intelligent seeker for truth will hesitate to accept without proof his assertions as to facts, or to adopt his opinions as to principles, without stronger support than his assertions.

Seeing that it is impossible for Col. Ingersoll to conceive of anything outside of and superior to what he calls nature, he sets about to prove that there is no God of creation. He says: "Each nation has created a god," and that "most of these gods were revengeful, savage, lustful and ignorant"; but it is for the extermination of the God of the Bible, as the Creator of all things, that he gathers up all his weapons, and it is upon Him that, in his rage, he exhausts his powers of assertion, ridicule, caricature, and denunciation; portrays Him as all that is cruel, tyrannical, base, and infamous, and flatters himself that he has succeeded in proving that He does not and never did exist. But, admitting Him to be all that Col. Ingersoll paints Him, it has nothing to do with the ques-

tion. For the present the question is not, whether He is a good or a bad God, but whether there is a God who created the universe. That being settled, the discussion of His moral character may be in order ; and it will require no very great stretch of the imagination to conceive that, if there be such a God, He may possibly understand what is right and good better than even Col. Ingersoll.

CHAPTER V.

WE shall get at a clear understanding of the question by a statement of the opinions held and maintained by each side of the controversy. It is admitted, I believe, on all hands that, apart from what is called revelation, we can know nothing of a God or the universe beyond what we can see or feel. We may do what we call reasoning from the known to the unknown, and our conclusions will be more or less correct as our reasonings are more or less sound, so far as our reason can go ; but at last we reach a point beyond which reasoning cannot go, and we are compelled to accept, upon what Col. Ingersoll describes as "that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance called faith," one of two, to the human intellect, incomprehensible, impossible absurdities : the one, that there is an uncreated Being of infinite power and intelligence, and self-existent from eternity, who created the universe ; the other, that dead, inert, unintelligent, uncreated matter existed from eternity, and that, in some way unexplained and inexplicable, without mind and without intelligence, it has formed itself into all the grand worlds that we see, has put them in motion and prescribed to them their courses, their times, and their seasons, which they have kept with unerring exactness and unfailing regularity from eternity ; that this same dead, unintelligent matter has formed itself into all the

innumerable varieties of animal and vegetable life that we find upon our earth ; that in some of the forms of animal life it has formed itself into great physical, and in others has added great intellectual, power. I say that, according to the theory, dead, unintelligent matter has done all this, because, while Col. Ingersoll ascribes everything to what he calls nature, he does not inform us how nature originated, nor whence she derived her power ; and as he says “ she cannot create,” she must necessarily be a part of matter or have been created by it. If she is a part of matter, then, of course, matter must have done all the work.

The human intellect cannot take in either of these theories, because it cannot conceive of anything without a beginning. Nevertheless here stands the hard, naked, incontestable fact confronting us—that the universe exists. Besides these two, there is no conceivable means by which it could have come into existence, and we have no escape from the acceptance of one or the other, and that acceptance must be upon what Col. Ingersoll characterizes as “ that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance called faith.”

So far as we have any traces of man, either from history or tradition, it is, according to Col. Ingersoll’s own showing, established that, whatever of attributes, either of good or bad, they may have ascribed to their gods, the great masses of people have accepted the first of these propositions with a faith which, if not supported by, is, from what we see and know, in no way opposed to or inconsistent with sound reason ; and it has at least this much in its favor, that those who live nearest the time of the

occurrence of any fact have better means for a correct knowledge of it than those who live at the greatest distance of time from it.

On the other hand, Col. Ingersoll, with his followers and predecessors, from the latter of whom he has evidently borrowed largely, has accepted the latter, with a miracle of faith which "throws away his reason," and, to use his own language, his "brain becomes the palace of an idiot king attended by a retinue of thieves and hypocrites."

Let it be borne in mind that I am not now defending the God of the Bible against Col. Ingersoll's ferocious attacks upon His moral character ; for, assuming that there is such a God, and admitting all his charges to be true, it proves nothing against His existence, His power, or His acts of creation. And after all it may turn out that He understands as well as Col. Ingersoll what is good, and has as clear conceptions of right and wrong.

If the saying be true that "The man who, in an argument, loses his temper, furnishes proof that he is in the wrong," we have only to read Col. Ingersoll's lecture upon "The Gods," in "the only correct and authorized edition," to be convinced that he is in error ; and if the extent of the error is to be determined by the violence of the temper, it is without limit, for although, in his reply to Judge Black, he says, "In the examination of a great and important question, every one should be serene, slow-pulsed, and calm," the bare mention of the name of God seems to work him up into a towering rage, and while he asserts that "epithets are the arguments of malice" he exhausts the vocabulary of epithets upon him.

Whatever opinion may be entertained of Col. Ingersoll's intellectual or moral soundness, or unsoundness, the heroic Quixotism with which he undertakes the generally difficult and, in the present case, the evidently impossible feat of proving a negative commands our admiration and entitles him to a clear field and a fair hearing, which he shall have.

As I have said, I am not defending God's moral character. For the present I do not propose to offer any evidence in proof even of His existence. I simply intend, by exposing Col. Ingersoll's absurdities and contradictions, his bold, senseless, and unfounded assertions, to show that he has proved nothing against it. But, while I shall not offer directly any evidence in favor of it, much will necessarily come to light from this exposure. I do not even intend to confront him with the Bible, because those who believe in the Bible need no further evidence of the existence of a God ; and with those who do not believe in a God, the Bible would be of no authority.

I have never believed in the policy so often and, as I think, unwisely recommended, of "fighting the devil with fire." If I have to fight man or devil, I prefer the weapon in the use of which not he, but I, am most skillful ; and, if the devil assail me with fire, I prefer to extinguish it with holy water. Col. Ingersoll's most effective weapon is bold assertion, without proof. Without that he would have nothing by which to bring his others into requisition. I shall not contend against him with that weapon.

It is true—and with about as much ground for it as Guiteau in seeking an appointment had for claiming that

Logan and Blaine were in his favor—Col. Ingersoll claims that he has two powerful allies to support him—reason and science. He often calls upon them as witnesses in his behalf, but, like Blaine and Logan in the Guiteau case, they repudiate his claim. Guiteau, with all his insanity, was too shrewd to be caught in such a trap. He did not call Blaine and Logan on his trial.

It is related that, upon an occasion when Philip of Macedon had been indulging too freely in his cups, one of his subjects, a rough countryman, applied to him to redress some wrong he had suffered, and being rudely repulsed, he cried out: "I appeal!" Philip, incensed by his insolence, sternly demanded: "To whom can you appeal from the king?" The countryman boldly replied: "I appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober," which brought Philip to his senses.

In this investigation I intend to oppose Col. Ingersoll sane to Col. Ingersoll insane; for, notwithstanding all his reckless assertions, his gross absurdities, his palpable self-contradictions, his grotesque vagaries, and his insane ravings, he is occasionally visited by lucid intervals, in which he utters sound reason and good common sense enough to demolish the whole fabric of insane and incongruous hallucinations to the construction of which a large portion of his life appears to have been devoted; but that "happy confusion of intellect" to which I have referred seems to have held him in blissful ignorance of the legitimate effects of those utterances of sound reason and good common sense, an example of which is found in his reply to Judge Black, when he says: "The mind of every thoughtful man is forced to one of these two conclusions:

either that the universe is self-existent, or that it was created by a self-existent being."

Here is the whole question fully and clearly stated in less than three lines of large print in the *North American Review*. He continues: "To my mind there are far more difficulties in the second hypothesis than the first."

In no aspect of the case can I perceive how the second hypothesis can present to any rational mind "far more difficulties than the first." To my mind it would be an exceedingly liberal proposition to admit that the difficulties in both cases would be equal, provided our reason required or even permitted us to reject, as opposed to or inconsistent with its dictates, everything that we cannot comprehend or fully understand. But, fortunately for the cause of truth, reason neither requires nor permits this; for we are constantly met in our every-day life by things outside of the domain of reason and intellect, and utterly beyond our comprehension. We can no more understand or explain how it is that, when a cow and a sheep live upon the same food, one should produce hair and the other wool, or why the wool of one sheep should be white and the other black, than we can comprehend and understand the existence of God and creation, and everything connected with the infinite. Yet nobody ever thinks of asserting that these things are inconsistent with or opposed to reason.

Our reason unhesitatingly, perhaps unconsciously, and certainly very wisely, adopts the conclusion that these things are the results of laws impressed upon the constitution of each animal in its creation by its creator, and that the reasons for those laws and their modes of opera-

tion are alike outside of the limits prescribed to the powers of investigation by the human intellect.

These difficulties were fully understood and appreciated thousands of years ago, when it was asked: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?"

But the hypothesis favored by Col. Ingersoll, although taken by itself it might be tolerated as one of the harmless illusions of a distempered imagination, when considered with its accompaniments, is so diametrically opposed to every conclusion that sound reason can reach, either by deduction or induction from what we really know, that a sound and intelligent mind can find no difficulty in the way of rejecting, it; indeed, it forces a rejection. In fact, in view of all that we know and all that we see every day and every night, the bare statement of the proposition stamps absurdity on its face.

CHAPTER VI.

THE term "universe" of course includes everything that exists, except God, if there is a God. To avoid all controversy about terms, we will take Col. Ingersoll's definition of it. He says: "The universe, according to my idea, is, always was, and forever will be. It did not come into being; it is the one eternal being—the only thing that ever did, does, or can exist."

This is bare assertion, which, as I have said, in view of all that we see and actually know, bears the stamp of absurdity on its face. There is but one way to prove it, and that is to prove there is no God. The extent to which Col. Ingersoll's argument can go is: "There is no God; therefore, the universe always was." But how do you know there is no God? "Because I have just proved that the universe always was, and therefore there can be no God." The only other argument that Col. Ingersoll relies upon to prove there is no God is that, by the accounts of His friends, He is a very bad God.

As it is not my purpose for the present to defend the moral character of God, nor even to attempt to prove that there is one, but simply to show that Col. Ingersoll has not urged a semblance of argument against His existence, I might here stop the discussion, which I would do but for two reasons: First, there may be some hard cases not yet convinced, and there is evidence behind

enough to reach the most hardened skepticism. Second, from whatever motives Col. Ingersoll may have been influenced to engage in the desperate enterprise of attempting to destroy God, the Bible, and Christianity,—whether from overweening vanity in over estimating his own intellectual powers or underrating those of others, a mischievous desire to play upon the credulity of the multitude, an insatiable thirst for notoriety or gold, a pure spirit of benevolence and philanthropy, or some other motive more or less worthy,—he evidently manifests some strong symptoms of insanity, and has involved himself in a labyrinth of absurdities and contradictions, from which he appears to be utterly unable to extricate himself without help. Perhaps we are all more or less insane, in consideration of which it may be that, in the asylums for the insane of modern times, the old appliances of the straight-jacket and corporal punishment have given place to instruction, kind treatment, and amusements.

Besides this, people sometimes repeat as a jest, or what they consider a witticism, what at first they know to be a lie, until, by mere force of repetition, they become thoroughly convinced of its truth, as the old negro asserted, until he believed it true, that “he remembered perfectly when the James River at Richmond was nothing but a little spring branch.” This is not a whit stranger than the hallucinations which sometimes take possession of minds otherwise sound, and which, for the time being, have all the effect of reality upon the feelings and actions. For example, that a man should conceive that he was made of glass, and suffer great fear when anybody was approaching him, lest by coming in collision

he should be broken in pieces ; and hundreds of other cases which are reported of like character. Sometimes they are thrown into great trepidation by seeing snakes and monkeys pursuing them. But Col. Ingersoll's is the only case I ever heard of in which the madness took the form and had the effect of making the victim believe and boast that his ancestors were snakes and monkeys. It is probable that at the first Col. Ingersoll said these things in the way of his trade, to raise a laugh and draw the half-dollars, and finding them, as Redpath says of him, " a good card," he repeated them until he got to believe them true :

" Like one
Who having unto truth, by telling of it,
Made such a sinner of his memory
To credit his own lie."

Men are sometimes cured of these hallucinations by having them kindly and gently presented to them in such a manner as to convince them that there is nothing real in them, but are the morbid creations of a distempered imagination, and I propose to endeavor to relieve Col. Ingersoll in that way ; and I have strong hopes that he may yet, like the man out of whom the legion of devils were cast, be " found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind ;" and my hopes are strengthened by the fact that last summer, when the doctors were pronouncing Garfield on the highway of recovery, a man, I believe of Illinois, predicted that he would die, and that Col. Ingersoll would be converted.

In some cases, when the victims get relief from the hallucinations under which they have labored, they come

out of them like a man out of a dreamless sleep, having no recollection of anything that passed during the time of their affliction. If the prediction of the Illinois man, that Col. Ingersoll will be converted, shall be fulfilled, and he should retain a recollection of his life for the last ten years, he will be no longer surprised that one human soul can entertain devils enough to drive two thousand hogs to the commission of suicide.

CHAPTER VII.

THE idea that the universe has existed from eternity is an old one, but it is possible that Col. Ingersoll's idea of growing himself and Shakespeare and all the rest of us from "the skulless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas," where we "wiggled without knowing why we wiggled," was an afterthought. It seems that in early life he conceived the benevolent idea of relieving the world from ignorance, superstition, slavery, crime, and misery, by eradicating from the human mind the belief in God, to which he attributed the origin and existence of all these evils, and, without duly considering, or utterly disregarding, the difficulties in the way, heroically went to work to accomplish this great work. Difficulties, so far from diverting him from his great purpose, only increased his confidence and his courage. Having sworn that the horse was sixteen feet high, he determined to stick to it. But, perhaps finding it necessary to account in some way for the work that has been done and is still going on in the world, he brings in what he calls "nature," who, he says, works "without passion or intention," who governs all words, actions, thoughts, feelings, and in fact all things, physical, intellectual, and moral, by a "mechanical necessity," thus divesting all actions, thoughts, words, sentiments, and feelings of all character, moral or immoral, and making man and everything else mere help-

less, passive, irresponsible tools of a controlling power which they have neither the will nor the ability to resist.

At one time he tells of the great crimes that have been committed by kings, at another by priests, at another by churches; what great sufferings have resulted to the human family, sometimes from these crimes, sometimes from superstition, and sometimes from ignorance, and what great things some men have done, and what he is now doing, to correct all these evils, but ends by making nature responsible for all of them. What a world this would be if it conformed to his creations ! He has unconsciously given an apt delineation of what it would be when he says, "It is as though we should give to a lion the wings of an eagle, the hoofs of a bison, the tail of a horse, the pouch of a kangaroo, and the trunk of an elephant. We have in imagination created an impossible monster." That is just what his goddess, nature, forming, transforming, and retransforming, without passion and without intention, would be likely to do.

What progress Col. Ingersoll is making towards the accomplishment of his great undertaking I am not informed, nor can I guess how long it will be before he completes it. I understand that he is very well satisfied with the result so far, but I imagine that he is very much in the condition of the old woman in her chase after the partridges, when I last heard from her. As the story goes, there was an old woman who was importunate in her request to a young man to marry her. One day when she was urging her request a flock of a dozen partridges passed them. To get rid of her, the young man told her that if she would run down and catch all of them he would marry her. Of

course, the thing got out, and soon became the standing jest of the neighborhood. About a month afterwards, one of the neighbors, going along the road, saw the old lady blowing, panting, and sweating, trotting along through the dust and sunshine, with one of the partridges playing along before her. "Well, old lady," he asked, "how are you getting on?" "Mighty well, mighty well." "How many have you got to catch?" "Only eleven, and this one before me!" And off she trotted after it.

It is my opinion that, in his efforts to eradicate the belief in God from the world, he is now and always will be just about as successful as the good old lady had been, by the last accounts, in catching the partridges. He has this advantage over her. Her hopes of reward were all in the future; he, from report, is picking up the half-dollars abundantly as he goes along.

But I have digressed. Let us return to the subject, as Col. Ingersoll, in one of his lucid intervals, presents it.

"The mind of every thoughtful man is forced to one of these two conclusions: either that the universe is self-existent, or that it was created by a self-existent being." Here is the real issue clearly and distinctly presented. Col. Ingersoll adopts the first hypothesis as the true one; and, without introducing a particle of evidence, or urging the semblance of a sound argument in support of the one, or against the other, he runs out into extravagant assertions, and brings into play all his powers of denunciation, ridicules and wit to frighten, cajole, or laugh people out of their belief in a God of creation. The true question, as presented by himself, is, "Was the universe created by a self-existent being?" And I defy any man of good com-

mon sense to put his finger upon a particle of evidence, or a semblance of sound argument, that he has presented in the negative.

I repeat, the question is not whether, according to Col. Ingersoll's ideas, He is a good or a bad God, not whether He committed murder in commanding the Jews to kill people, nor whether this or that nation had one opinion or another of Him, not whether He violated all the commandments He has given to men, not whether He commanded men to be the first to hurl the rugged stones at the tender bosoms of their wives, not whether He gave His children farms full of briers and bushes and beasts of prey and poisonous reptiles, not whether the Bible is true or false, nor whether the church is pure or corrupt, nor whether Christianity is divine or the cunningly devised fables of priestcraft to enslave the minds of men—for assertions like these constitute the staple of what Col. Ingersoll considers, and seems to expect sensible people to receive, as arguments ; and all these things might be true without proving anything ; but the question is, "Did God, in the beginning, create the heavens and the earth ?"

Possibly I may be able hereafter to present some evidences and arguments in support of the affirmative of this question ; but for the present my business is with what Col. Ingersoll considers his arguments, for he produces no evidence in support of the negative. And it may be well just here to call up Col. Ingersoll, and give him a chance to enforce and illustrate some of what he calls his arguments ; and as he frequently talks about a watch, we will hear him on that.

CHAPTER VIII.

ABOUT the beginning of this century there was in Liverpool a celebrated watchmaker by the name of Roskell; at least I have always believed there was, and it seemed to be generally believed; in fact, I never heard an expression of doubt upon the subject, and have seen many watches with his name engraved upon them, as evidence of the existence and skill of the workman, as the evidence of God's existence and power is stamped upon all of His works.

Let us suppose that Col. Ingersoll, in conversation with a friend, should pull out his watch to get the time, and his friend, on seeing it, should remark: "Colonel, that is an elegant watch you have there; it looks like an old Roskell."

I propose to give such a conversation as I suppose this remark and Col. Ingersoll's principles, so far as I can make them out, might naturally and certainly lead to:

Colonel. Yes, it's a fine watch, and it has "Robert Roskell" engraved on the inside; but he never made it, and, as a matter of fact, there was never any such man.

Friend. How do you know that?

Colonel. Why, I have known a great many people who believed there was such a man, and that he made these watches with his name on them, though they had never seen him; and they have told me that he whipped his

wife, beat and sometimes killed his children ; and, moreover, that he often took watches that he had made and broke them to pieces for amusement, or because they did not suit him exactly, or because he had got into a passion ; and a great many other mean and cruel things I have heard of his doing ; and I tell you I don't believe there was ever any such man, or that he made any watches.

Friend. And do you believe all these things you have heard of him ?

Colonel. Certainly I do ; for they have been told me by his friends ; and, besides, I know that wives have been whipped, and children beaten and starved, and even killed, and watches and other things smashed ; and they might as well have been done by him as by other people.

Friend. Well, that's rather puzzling to me ; you've got a great deal more sense, Colonel, than I have, and understand these things better ; but I can't understand how a man can have a wife and whip her, and children and beat them, and make watches and smash them, and yet there be no man to have and to do these things. I suppose you can explain it all, so as to make it plain to you ; but I don't think I've got sense enough to understand it if you were to explain it ; but there is one thing perhaps you can explain, so that I can understand it. Here's the watch—who made it ?

Colonel. Who made it ? Why, nobody.

Friend. Well, how came it here ?

Colonel. Why, nature made it.

Friend. Well, Colonel, it is my opinion that if you

are in earnest, and believe what you say, you are gone clean crazy. Will you tell me how nature made it?

Colonel. I am in dead earnest, and I am not crazy, either. I can tell you very easily, and rationally, too, and so plainly that you can see it just as clearly as that two and two make four, how nature made it. She did not make the materials of which it is composed, for she "cannot create," but, "without passion or intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever." The materials were not made—they just came so. She finds them ready to her hands. Of course you know that, by her "absolute, eternal, inexorable laws," she has made all atoms of matter attract each other. So she made some atoms of copper and zinc attract each other and made brass, which she "formed, transformed, and retransformed" until she had made it into all the necessary wheels, with exactly the right number of cogs in each, and all this "without intention;" and then, by the same process of attraction, forming, transforming, and retransforming, she got some iron, and "formed, transformed, and retransformed" it until she made it into steel, and then she "formed, transformed, and retransformed" it until she got it into the main-spring and into the hair-spring; and all this without intention; and then she got the diamonds for the wheels to run upon, and the gold to make the case, and the sand and soda to make the glass for the crystal, and then "formed, and transformed, and retransformed," until at last she got everything into its place, and all this "without intention," and, as you see, a perfect watch is the result.

Friend. Well, Colonel, now I know you are crazy, or else you are a natural-born fool.

Colonel. No, I ain't crazy, neither, nor a natural-born fool. It is you who are too ignorant and too superstitious to understand nature. I'll explain it to you. You, of course, know that nature took a little speck of something—we don't exactly know what it is, as she hides that from us—and “formed, and transformed, and retransformed” it until she got it into one of those “skulless vertebrates in the dim Laurentian seas—vertebrates wiggling without knowing why they wiggled, and swimming without knowing where they were going,”—and then “transformed and retransformed” them until she has made them into all plants and trees, and all animals, and at last made a man and woman, from which I, and Shakespeare, and Lincoln, and Washington, and you, and all of us have sprung. Now, any fool can see that it is a great deal easier to make a watch than a man, or even a woman.

Friend. But it seems to me that this watch gives unquestionable evidence of plan and design, which you say you know nothing about.

Colonel. Why, man, that's the beauty of my doctrine. “Nature, so far as we discern, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever.” That is the reason why we have so many different kinds of plants and trees, and so many different kinds of animals. Instead of wasting her time in planning and designing, she just went to work forming, transforming, and retransforming. She never had any idea what she was going to make; her own “absolute, eternal, inexo-

rable laws," without giving her any information, or even consulting her, determined the result of her work ; sometimes it turned out a fish and sometimes a stone, a worm or a tree, a sheep or a tiger, a grasshopper or an eagle, a fly or an elephant ; but she has kept on forming, transforming, and retransforming until she has made everything we see.

Friend. But, Colonel, since nature has set all these worlds in motion, and so easily keeps them in their regular times and motions, it seems to me that she might have saved all the trouble of making all those wheels and springs by making for us a pretty little thing which would move all the time by attraction, gravitation, electricity, magnetism, or some of her other contrivances, and which would always point out the time just exactly right, and every ten or fifteen minutes cry out the time, if we should forget to look at it.

Colonel. There is no doubt she will do that some of these days ; she is constantly at work, but you must remember she has been in the watch-making business, so far as we know, only three or four hundred years ; give her time, and she will reach perfection. She "formed, transformed, and retransformed" for thousands, and, for aught that we know, millions of years before she made a man ; and up to this time we know of nothing she has made superior to me and Shakespeare, but I believe she will some time make a race with all the faculties and powers that we possess, with the addition of wings, by which we shall be enabled to fly like the birds ; and, in fact, I am now going to tell you what I never told anybody before, I believe she has made such a race.

Friend. Why, Colonel, what in the world put such nonsense into your head ?

Colonel. Well, as I have told you so much, I may as well tell you the whole of it.

A long time ago there was an English ship traversing some of the distant and then unfrequented seas, when, one day, the man on watch discovered, at a great distance, a large body in the air moving with great velocity directly towards the ship. He gave the alarm, and all hands immediately came on deck to see it. It was something evidently transported by beings having the appearance of men, with the addition of wings. As the body was large, and was evidently approaching the ship, the captain and all the crew were in great consternation lest the purpose might be to drop it on the ship and sink it. The captain therefore ordered a cannon to be fired at it, and those who were carrying it immediately dropped it into the water and flew off. Upon approaching it the captain found that it was a large wooden raft, and, to the great astonishment of himself and his crew, it was found that there was a man upon it. The shock received from the fall had rendered him insensible; in fact he appeared to be dead ; but he was taken on board, and it was found that life was not extinct. For a long time, many days in fact, he was unconscious, and hovering between life and death, but at length, by the administration of restoratives, and the careful nursing of the only passenger on board, he was ultimately restored to consciousness ; but it was found that his system had received such a shock from the fall that there was little hope of a final recovery. Indeed, he communicated to his friend his conviction that his lease upon life was short,

and his anxiety to give to the world an account of his adventures which ended so strangely. As, from internal injuries he had received, conversation was both laborious and painful, he devoted himself almost entirely to writing. The voyage proved to be a long one, and he died before the ship reached her destination. A few minutes before his death, he called his friend to him, and said: "My dear friend, I cannot express to you in words my gratitude to you for your kindness; I have nothing with which to make you any return, but that manuscript lying there on the table. It contains a true account of the wonderful adventures which have befallen me, and of which you have witnessed the end. Take it, and, by publishing it, you may receive some compensation for your kindness to me." This was the account given of it by his friend when he published it.

It has been a long time since I have read it, and my memory, though, as you know, a very extraordinary one, will enable me to give you the most prominent outlines only, as at that time I did not attach to it that importance which the grand discoveries I have since made, as to the powers of nature, now give it.

CHAPTER IX.

THE man's name was Peter Wilkins, an Englishman born and reared in London. He had from his youth great fondness for the sea, particularly for long voyages. In his last but the one I have just mentioned the ship on which he was embarked was for many days driven by a violent adverse wind into unknown seas, where they discovered that they were approaching land not laid down upon any of the charts; and, as the sky was all the time hidden from view by thick clouds, they were unable to take any observations by which to find their latitude or longitude. The ship was driven with great violence upon a ledge of rocks not far from the shore, and Peter, without knowing how long he had lain there, awoke to consciousness finding himself lying on the shore. Upon looking around him, he saw the broad sea now calm and smooth, and the shore lined with pieces of the ship and much of the cargo, which had been washed ashore, but not a living soul; all but he had evidently perished.

In due season he found that he was on a beautiful, well-wooded country, with plenty of wild fruits, but, so far as he could discover, uninhabited by people.

His first work was to provide himself some place for his own comfort and security, and for the preservation and protection of as much as possible of the cargo of the

vessel ; for, as she had been victualed for a long voyage, there were not only plenty of provisions, but many other things of value thrown upon the shore. In some of the rocks near the shore he found a cave, which offered him shelter for the present, and which in time he was enabled to make very comfortable by a little labor and the aid of bedding, tables, chairs, and many other conveniences gathered from the wreck.

He had been there something less than a year, spending most of the time in anxiously but vainly watching for some passing ship to relieve him from his solitary and lonely life, when, one warm, clear, moonshiny night, he heard what appeared to him the sound of the mingling of many human voices. Filled with joy by the idea that the sounds proceeded from the voices of the crew of some vessel that had arrived after dark without having been perceived by him, he rushed out of his cave to meet them. But, instead of finding a ship and its crew, he was greeted by a sight which filled him with astonishment and awe. The water, as far as the eye could reach, was covered by very small boats, which appeared to be propelled by sails ; but, though there was barely a perceptible breeze, they darted with amazing speed in every direction. From every boat proceeded peals of laughter, or what he supposed was conversation, and they seemed to be engaged in some sort of sport. Some appeared to be racing, others in chasing each other, and others in trying to see what fancy figures they could make on the water, as we see people do in skating ; while above them the air was filled with flying bodies engaged in the same way.

Secreting himself in a clump of bushes near by, he

watched the scene for three hours, when a strange sound came from one of the flying bodies, which seemed to be a signal; to his unutterable astonishment, he saw every boat rise up into the air and fly off with the others.

This was the first night after the moon had reached her first quarter, and the scene was reënacted every night until the third after her full. Every night Peter had, from his hiding-place, watched the scene with the hope of discovering a clue to the explanation of this wonderful phenomenon. On this night the sports had been continued much longer than previously, and Peter had, a few minutes before twelve o'clock, left his hiding-place and gone to his cave, for the purpose of retiring for the night. He had been there but a few minutes when, as if wonders were never to cease with him, he heard, as if almost within his door, a shrill shriek, followed immediately by a dull thud of a sound, as if some heavy body had been forcibly dashed against the side of the rock. Hastily running out, he discovered by the light of the moon the apparently lifeless body of a woman. He shouted aloud, hoping to call some of those who, he instinctively concluded, were her companions; but he heard no sound and saw nobody; all was silent and still—they were all gone. He carried her in and laid her upon his bed. He saw that she was wholly unconscious, and feared that she was fatally injured. He administered some stimulating restorative and sat by her all night, bathing her temples and rubbing her hands and feet; and shortly after the sun arose, to his ineffable delight he saw her eyes open. Fortunately, though badly bruised, it turned out that no bones were broken, nor any fatal injury sustained.

CHAPTER X.

SUFFICE it to say, that after several weeks of confinement to the bed, she was so far recovered as to be able to walk a little with his help. In the mean time they had fallen desperately in love with each other, and, with no witness but nature, then and there vowed eternal fidelity to each other and became man and wife. He discovered that what appeared to be her dress were her wings, which, springing from her shoulders, enveloped her person like a garment, without interfering with the use of her limbs—serving as dress on land, as sails on the water, and wings in the air.

At first they could converse by signs only ; but they soon learned enough of the language of each other to make themselves understood ; and the account she gave him was, that her people lived far off from that place, and once every year came, as he had seen, to enjoy sea-bathing ; that on the night on which he found her, being the last for the season, they continued the sport to the last moment allowed ; and that, she and another girl having been chasing each other, she darted down among the trees very rapidly, to escape from the sight of her pursuer, and had, while looking behind her, got so near the rock that she could not stop in time to save herself from the collision, which but for his care would doubtless have proved fatal.

The next year at the same time the people returned, and to their great joy found her alive. When they left they fixed up a sort of a hammock to carry him, and took him, his wife, and the child which had been born to them with them ; by the way, the child was born with wings like its mother's. They also, at his suggestion, carried with them a great many of the things of most value which he had saved from the wreck.

I don't remember exactly why he left the country ; but my impression is that his wife and children all died, and, finding himself alone and tied down to the earth, while everybody else could travel at pleasure through air and water, he became dissatisfied and desired to get back among his own people, where he would not be so constantly confronted with the evidences of his immense inferiority to everybody around him ; and that, in consideration of some great service he had rendered the king of the country, he provided him the means of transportation in the manner I have told you.

Friend. And you believe all this ?

Colonel. Believe it ? Why, of course I do—every word of it. What man of common intelligence could resist such evidence ? First, there is the testimony of the passenger who nursed Wilkins, and of the captain and all the crew that they saw these flying people ; that establishes beyond all question the fact of their existence. And, then, there is Wilkins's account of his residence among them for years, bearing all the evidences of a plain, calm, simple statement of a conscientious, truthful man, in the very face of death. I believe it so strongly that I intend to exert my great influence with Congress,

at this very session, to send out exploring expeditions to every part of the globe to hunt for them.* What a poor thing the finding of Sir John Franklin's bones would be to the glory of discovering and introducing to the world such a people ! And if I can't prevail upon the Government to do it, I think, as soon as I make money enough by my lectures and from the sale of my books, I will fit out one myself. It is only lately that I have thought much about it ; and since I have been thinking of it I have wondered why none of our exploring expeditions have not found them, or at least some traces of them, for it may be possible that they have flown off to some other planet, though it is my impression that they inhabit that beautiful country and delightful climate which, Symmes says, exist at the North Pole ; which I formerly thought one of the vagaries of a wild enthusiast, but now think it more than likely that his opinion is correct.

Friend. Now, look here, Colonel, did you ever meet any sensible man who looked upon that Peter Wilkins story as anything else than an interesting fiction ?

Colonel. Well, I can't say I did ; and, to tell the truth, I must confess that I considered it in the same light myself when I read it, but then we were all in a state of great ignorance ; we had not reached the exalted platform of intelligence upon which we now stand ; especially,

* I see that a bill has been introduced in Congress to appropriate money for another Arctic expedition. Was this done through Col. Ingersoll's influence ? and is the object to search for his flying people ?

I had not made the grand discovery that "nature, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and re-transforms forever," nor the still grander one that I and Shakespeare, instead of descending from that old rascal Adam, who was mean enough to lay all the blame on his wife, have come up from the good honest "skulless vertebrates in the dim Laurentian seas, vertebrates wiggling without knowing why they wiggled, and swimming without knowing where they were going."

Friend. But I thought you didn't believe in miracles.

Colonel. Believe in miracles! of course, I don't. I believe in nothing outside of nature, for "beyond nature man cannot go, even in thought—above nature he cannot rise—below nature he cannot fall." But that human beings should have wings is entirely within the range of the power of nature to "form, transform and retransform." Haven't I just told you that I and Shakespeare came up from the "skulless vertebrates in the dim Laurentian seas?" And if nature can from a thing without arms or hands or feet, make such men as me and Shakespeare, and especially such grand intellects as mine and his, just think how trifling a matter it would be to add a couple of wings, which would make us so much more perfect and give us so much more power.

CHAPTER XI.

IT is only since I have made these grand discoveries of the powers of nature that I have thought much of the great blessing it would be to the human race to have wings, and with how little trouble nature could confer it. This recalled to me the recollection of Peter Wilkins's account of those flying people. Knowing that what nature has done once she can do again, I concluded that, though I might be too old for her to do perfect work, yet, by "helping nature" a little, as the doctors say, she might make me a pair of little wings, and if I could get a pair, no matter how small, I could set her to work on younger people, and, having once got her to work in that line, she would soon become perfect, and being sole possessor of the means of controlling her, I would have her out to make wings for other people, as Redpath did me to lecture, with this difference: that I would get all the money. So I went and bought me two bottles of St. Jacob's Oil and a yard of the finest flesh-colored silk oil-cloth that I could find, that being nearer, than anything I could think of, like the material of which I supposed the wings were made, from which I cut two small wings, and pasted the end of one on each of my shoulders, just by way of intimating to nature what I wanted done, and giving her a little aid by furnishing her a little raw material to start with, knowing that she

could "transform and retransform" it to suit herself ; and by way of rendering her a little further aid in the start I rubbed my shoulders every night and morning with St. Jacob's Oil. But the experiment came very near being fatal to me. One night, when I had indulged in one of my grandest flights of imagination, some fellow out in the hall, carried away, as I afterwards found, by his enthusiasm, cried out, "Go it, Colonel ! you are spreading your wings now." I came very near sinking down in my tracks, for it flashed across me that somehow the fellow had found out that I was cultivating wings, and intended to expose me before the crowd ; but I recovered myself in an instant, and I don't think anybody perceived the effect it had produced upon me.

But to return. I had used up my two bottles of St. Jacob's Oil and had bought and used up four more, with little or no effect that I could perceive ; and I was about to conclude that nature was playing me false, and to give the thing up as a hopeless job, when, in my investigations into the secrets of nature, I was fortunate enough, not long since, to discover the ingredients and proportions of Dr. Ramrod's Celebrated Tincture of Gridiron. This wonderful tincture had in the last century a world-wide reputation, and there were then, and may perhaps yet be found in some of the old books, numerous accounts of what the people in their ignorance then considered its miraculous effects ; but in my investigations I have discovered that it is simply one of nature's agents by which she "forms, transforms, and retransforms." Two of the cases mentioned as very miraculous I remember : one was a man who had fallen from a window upon a large undershot

mill-wheel in rapid motion, and being carried between the wheel and the house, was thrown into the stream below crushed out of all proportion. There happened to be a man present with a vial of Doctor Ramrod's Tincture of Gridiron in his pocket, which he immediately emptied into the stream, and the man walked out sound and whole, with no inconvenience but his wet clothing. In the other case, some men were out boating, when one of them fell into the water; as his companions were drawing him in, a shark bit off one of his legs just below the knee; he seemed to be bleeding to death, when one of them, remembering that he had a vial of the tincture in his pocket, applied it; the bleeding stopped instantly, and before they reached the land the man's leg was as perfect and sound as ever.

Such cases as these appear to the ignorant to be what are called miracles, when, in truth, they are perfectly natural, and occur much more frequently than they suppose. The elements of this tincture exist in abundance, and from causes which I am investigating, but have not yet been able to discover, they exist in some particular localities in superabundance. Whenever any accident happens in one of these places, no injury results from it. For example, we see a man fall from a third or fourth story of a house to a stone pavement and get up and walk off as if nothing had happened. Now there is no doubt that half of the bones in his body were broken, but it happened to be one of those places where there was great superabundance of the elements of the tincture, and nature applied them the instant he touched the ground, and restored everything before he or anybody else had

time to see that he had sustained any injury. As to the leg, we know that some of the lower forms of animal life, when they lose a leg, have a new one restored; the lobster, when he loses one of his claws, instinctively seeks and employs it and gets a new claw; but in these cases, as it is in a diluted form, longer time is required to do the work. In the higher forms it requires a more condensed form. In fact, it is the agent by which nature brought me and Shakespeare up from "the skulless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas." To prove to you the marvelous power of this element, I saw recently, in the *Washington Post*, an account taken from a St. Louis paper of a man, by the name of Dick Sullivan, who had a few weeks before fallen sixty feet from the top of a house on a stone pavement, and was then walking about on his crutches. Now, there is no doubt that this man was mashed into a jelly, but nature immediately applied this element before he or anybody else discovered his condition. But unfortunately there was not quite enough of it to restore so very bad a case, and I suppose there was one of his legs, or perhaps only one of his feet, that was not entirely restored.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT an incalculable amount of suffering would have been saved to the world if old Ramrod had possessed enough of the milk of human kindness to reveal his secret before he died ! But, thanks to nature, she has at last yielded up her secret to me, and I will not follow his example; for, after I have made money enough out of it for myself, I will give it to the world, or at least so arrange that the world shall have it after my death, that is, provided I ever die, for I am not sure but it may make me immortal. As I told you, I have but recently made the discovery, and have made only enough for my own use; I have applied it to my shoulders but three times, and already I have some strange sensations, which I think indicate the formation of new bones and muscles; in fact, I believe my wings are sprouting, and I have no doubt that in a week I shall have a pair of pretty little wings, and perhaps nature may make them large enough to enable me to fly; and then won't I astonish the world !

And what a pity it is that I did not discover it before the war ! Just think what an incalculable benefit I would have conferred upon the country and what glory I would have acquired for myself ! Instead of foolishly going off coloneling, and letting that rascally rebel Ned Forest catch and send me off home like a whipped school-boy caught stealing apples, I would have made up a large

quantity of it and gone with our army to the first battle of Manassas, and when one of our boys was mangled by a shell, or shot down, or had a leg or an arm shot off, I would just have applied a few drops to him, and he would have gone on fighting just the same. Of course we should have exterminated the whole rebel army and closed the war at once, instead of permitting them, as Bob Toombs says, to take four years to wear themselves out whipping us.

In truth, I am now satisfied that they had a knowledge of this or something like it to help them. For upon no other hypothesis can it be accounted for that a people so utterly sunk in barbarism and ignorance, in every way so generally inferior to us, not more than one third of our number, as compared with us almost destitute of the implements, munitions, and appliances of war, shut out from intercourse and aid and sympathy of the whole world, while we had its aid and sympathy, and commanded and led by officers immeasurably inferior to ours, should, as Bob Toombs said, have actually worn themselves out whipping us. And that even with all these advantages on our side, they would, as Lincoln said, have worn us out, but for the help we received from the niggers. You may depend upon it they had a knowledge of this, or something like it, and used it.

Nor have I any doubt that it was known to a few thousands of years ago. All the stories about that fellow Achilles being made invulnerable everywhere but in the heel, by which his mother held him when she dipped him into the river of Styx, are mere bosh. He had no doubt been wounded very often, but his mother had somehow

possessed herself of this element, and when he went to the Trojan war she supplied him with a large quantity of it in a very condensed form; and whenever he was wounded, he immediately applied a drop or two, and of course nobody knew he had ever been even scratched, and therefore concluded that he was invulnerable. But when that cowardly dandy, Paris, went to shoot him, he was in such a hurry, and so badly scared, that he couldn't take good aim, and just happened to hit him in the heel. The truth is, that his supply had given out, or, more probably, as he had fallen in love and had gone off to treat for his marriage with Paris's sister, he either forgot to take any of the element with him, or didn't think it necessary. Paris shot him with a poisoned arrow, and would have killed him just as well if he had struck him anywhere else. But, as he had always been held to be invulnerable, and was killed by a wound in the heel, they accounted for it by trumping up that river of Styx story.

CHAPTER XIII.

BUT this grand discovery will give me a power which I value even more than that of making wings.

Friend. Well, lack-a-day, Colonel! you astonish me more and more. Do tell me what you can consider more valuable than wings.

Colonel. And so I will; but as you are the only living soul to whom I would tell it, you must say nothing about it, for if it should get out, and I should fail, I should never hear the last of it, and it would make me ridiculous. And though ridicule is my strongest weapon, yet if I were subjected to it myself, it would sting me to death. The preachers, as you know, have charged me with everything wicked and devilish; but I don't mind that; I rather like it, and think it helps me, because everybody knows that I am a good fellow, and in many respects better than many of them; but if I should make myself a fit subject for ridicule, everybody, even my best friends, would join in the laugh against me; they couldn't help it, and, jiminy! how my enemies would exult and triumph! I couldn't stand it.

Well, you know that for years, from pure motives of patriotism and philanthropy, I have labored hard and made great sacrifices in my efforts to liberate the world from the abject and degrading slavery to which it has

been subjected, and in which it is held by that horrible offspring of ignorance and superstition, the belief in a God and the Christian religion. I thought at one time that I was on the high-road to success. The crowd flocked by hundreds and thousands to my lectures, paid their half-dollars freely, and cheered and applauded me to the echo. Not only the masses, but the money power of the country appeared to be with me. Bankers, manufacturers, and railroad men were all delighted with, and honored me. But, strange to say, I couldn't be Governor of Illinois. Last year, I left my usual course and exerted my great powers in the support of Garfield for President, and by denouncing the South as everything that is base and infamous, and charging everything that was low and mean to the Democrats, and claiming for the Republican party everything that ever had been done that was good or creditable, I have no doubt that I secured his election, and felt that I was entitled to at least one of the best foreign missions, and had no doubt that I would get it. But I found that I had less, or my enemies more, strength than I had calculated, for though Garfield patted me on the back, and called me Royal Bob, he dared not give me the appointment; nor has Arthur given me one. My failure to get one of the best appointments in the gift of the Government, I attribute entirely to the influence of what is called the religious sentiment of the country; in other words, the power of the Church, which is the power of the priesthood.

You can scarcely imagine, though you may form a faint conception of, the happiness it would afford me to be able to turn these gentry, who preach to silks, laces, and jew-

elry every Sunday for ten or fifteen thousand dollars a year, out to make a living by honest work, which I believe I shall be able to do.

You know that the whole fabric of the Christian religion is based upon and supported by what are called "the miracles" said to have been performed by Christ and his apostles. Now this grand discovery of mine, when I get it in its perfection, will enable me to demonstrate that these pretended miracles are simply the operations of some of nature's laws which she has not generally revealed, and when I do this the whole structure

Will melt into air, into thin air,
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a rack behind.—SHAKESPEARE.

This man Christ, according to the accounts given of him, was unquestionably an extraordinary man. He must have been very nearly equal to me or Shakespeare. At twelve years of age he excited the astonishment of the people by his wisdom in disputing with the Doctors in the Temple as much as I did in disputing with the minister in Cleveland at the same age.

From that time we hear nothing of him until he was "beginning to be about thirty years of age." It is claimed that he was working at the carpenter's trade with his reputed father, but I find no evidence of it. He was certainly a good, pure, and patriotic man; and it is my opinion that, disgusted with the moral corruption and the political degradation of his people, he secluded himself from public view and devoted his great talents to working out some plan by which he might lift his people from

their moral corruption and make them again a great and controlling nation. In the mean time, in his solitude and seclusion, he must have come much in contact with nature, and his great genius enabled him, as mine has me, to discover the great life-giving element of nature, with this difference : that he either found it in, or brought it to, its perfection and greatest strength, which I have not yet done, but doubt not I shall be able to do.

Being a Jew, he knew that any attempt to enlighten and reform his people would be useless, unless he could convince them that he was armed with the power and authority of what they called their God. To convince them of this, he went about preaching the highest and purest morality, and, by what appeared to be a miraculous power, healing the sick (which his disciples called casting out devils) and raising the dead, which he claimed to do by the power and authority of their God.

While he made quite a considerable number of converts, he found he was producing but little effect upon the Jews as a nation. Being a great enthusiast and willing to suffer for the benefit of his people, it occurred to him that if he were to die and rise from the dead it would at once force conviction of his divine mission upon the whole people. Accordingly, he announced that such would be the case ; and through Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, the arrangement was made with Pilate that he should be publicly crucified. It is clear that the thing was a put-up job, for there was nothing in the charges against him which could justify a Roman governor in authorizing a mob to put him to death, as Pilate himself admitted.

To guard against any mistake or failure, it was arranged, too, that Joseph should place the body in his own sepulchre, and that he and Nicodemus, supplied with the life-giving element, should restore him to life. For you remember that it is said that Nicodemus came with a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and he and Joseph wrapped them with the body in fine linen and laid it in the sepulchre. There is no doubt that there and then they restored him to life. After that, all was easy. When at the proper time he rolled away the stone at the door of the sepulchre to come out, the guards placed as a watch were of course scared nearly to death, and doubtless ran away.

As to his appearing to his disciples and disappearing at pleasure, and his going up into heaven, he had commenced preparing for that as soon as he conceived the idea. By the use of this wonderful element of nature he had, as I am now doing, grown himself a good pair of wings, with which he could fly like an eagle. He had, of course, known of what Lyncurgus did, when, after having prepared the Spartans a good code of laws, he made them swear to observe them until he returned from a journey he was about to take. So Christ enjoined on his disciples to obey his commandments until he should return. Then he flew away, and we hear no more of him. I have not the least doubt that he went to that far-off country and established the flying people, of which Peter Wilkins gave the account, of which I have told you.

As soon as my wings grow out and I have got the element in its perfection and most condensed form, I shall

succeed in raising the dead, and then the whole Christian superstition will disappear like a bursted soap-bubble, my popularity will be unbounded, and I shall be absolute ruler of the country, and, perhaps, of the whole world. What do you think of it?

Friend. Well, Colonel, I must confess that I have listened to you with increasing astonishment from beginning to end, and all that I have to say is, that I am something like old George W. Moore, when the Justice of the Peace made what he considered an outrageous decision against him. Old George kept what in those days was called a tavern; it is now called hotel. As was the general custom, there was planted before his door a post, fifteen or twenty feet high, with a frame on top, in which there was swung a sign-board, with his name painted in large letters on both sides, so that it could be seen by a traveler approaching from either end of the road. There was no gas in those days, and lamps were scarce, so that the main reliance for light was upon tallow candles and pine knots; of course there were no lights hung in the streets before the doors.

One among others of old George's peculiarities was, that, no matter what he was going to say, he invariably commenced with the word "merely." One dark, rainy night a traveler rode up and called, and upon George's going to the door, asked, "Who keeps this tavern?" George replied, "Merely, just cast up your eyes and you will see George W. Moore, in full."—"As I have not the eyes of a cat," returned the traveler, "I will save myself the trouble of casting them up, and get out of this rain as quickly as possible."

From his invariable and indiscriminate use of the term, it came to pass in the course of time that in speaking of him his neighbors used the name "Old Merely," almost to the entire exclusion of his real name ; but to him and the Justice of the Peace.

CHAPTER XIV.

It happened, and a thing that very rarely happened, that he had a case in which the Justice of the Peace made against him a decision, at which he felt so outraged that, though not much given to profanity, he blurted out, "Merely, it is my opinion that this Court is a damp-hool." The Court: "Mr. Moore, you are fined ten dollars." Moore: "Merely, that just confirms me in my opinion." This was told and repeated as a good joke upon old George, until "Merely that just confirms me in my opinion" got to be a very common reply.

There was in the same county a circuit judge of marked ability, who presided with great dignity, and sometimes with something of austerity. He had a younger brother, a lawyer, who practiced in his courts. He was, like you, named Bob, and was noted for his wit and dry humor. Upon the occasion of the trial of an important case, in which Bob had argued some law point with great earnestness and zeal, the judge decided against him, upon which, he arose, and, with great gravity of manner, remarked, "Merely, it is my opinion that this Court"—everybody, of course, knew that Bob would not finish the sentence after the manner of old George; he, no doubt, intended to amuse the crowd, by showing how adroitly he could convey the whole meaning, without the use of an offensive word. But the judge, taken by surprise, and incensed

by what he considered a purpose to insult the Court, or anxious to save his brother from placing himself in a position which would necessarily subject him to some punishment, perhaps both, interrupted him in his sternest tones, with "Finish that sentence, sir, and I'll send you to jail." But the judge would have done better not to have been in such haste, for Bob, with one of his blandest smiles and most graceful bows, instantly replied, "May it please the Court, merely, that just confirms me in my opinion." This convulsed the court with laughter, even the judge could not repress a smile, even though at his own expense, for he, in common with everybody else, saw at once how completely his haste had enabled Bob to get in the whole idea, without the least tangible discourtesy to the Court.

And after my long yarn about George and the Justice of the Peace, now for the application. I told you more than an hour ago that in my opinion you were either crazy or a natural-born fool; and now, after hearing all you have said, all that I have to say is "merely, that just confirms me in my opinion."

CHAPTER XV.

EXTRAVAGANT and preposterously absurd as these things may appear, it cannot be denied that they are the legitimate and logical deductions from Colonel Ingersoll's theories of the "forming, transforming, and retransforming power" of nature, or that there is in them nothing more absurd than he has, in so many words, advocated. Leaving him to nurse his wings and prepare for his work of exploding Christianity by raising the dead, I will resume, as the preachers say, the thread of my discourse.

Col. Ingersoll might make a much stronger case in favor of his hypothesis and his theories, if it were not for the existence of our earth. But, unfortunately for him, it does exist, and being within our reach, we are enabled to find upon it and in it much of the known from which to reason to the unknown in support of our hypothesis, while if he attempts to reason at all, he must reason from the unknown in support of his ; which means no reasoning at all. Still more unfortunately for him, science, which he professes to worship so devoutly, and upon which he, with "that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance called faith," so blindly relies for support, comes in, and, dissipating with one wave of its wand all the mists and fogs in which he has enveloped himself, leaves him not an inch of ground upon which to stand.

In one of his lucid intervals Col. Ingersoll appears to

have caught a glimpse of this difficulty, when he said : “The Church teaches that this world and all that it contains were created substantially as we now see them ; that the grasses, the flowers, the trees, and all animals were special creations, and that they sustain no necessary relation to each other.”

And what does the reader suppose he offers as proof of the incorrectness of this opinion ? He says : “The most orthodox will admit that some earth has been washed into the sea ; that the sea has encroached a little upon the land, and that some mountains may be a trifle lower than in the morning of creation.”

It is as though, upon visiting a house he had not seen for many years, Col. Ingersoll should assert that it was not, substantially, the same house, and should offer us an argument in proof of his assertion, that it was admitted that the paint had been rubbed off in a few places, and that a few panes of glass had been broken out of the windows. What opinion must people of common sense entertain of an intellect which can consider such stuff sound argument ? or of the honesty of a man one remove from idiotcy, who should attempt to impose it as such upon others, whom he was proposing, from motives of benevolence and philanthropy, to enlighten as to the truth on a matter of vital importance ?

When Col. Ingersoll put forth such stuff as an argument, he had clearly relapsed into his normal condition, and proceeded : “The theory of gradual development was unknown to our fathers ; the idea of evolution did not occur to them. Our fathers looked upon the then arrangement of things as the primal arrangement. The

earth appeared to them fresh from the hands of a deity. They knew nothing of the slow evolutions of countless years, but supposed that the almost infinite variety of vegetable and animal forms had existed from the first."

After two pages more to prove that God was a very poor architect, and at best very bad, he says: "What would we think of a father who should give a farm to his children, and before giving them possession, should plant upon it thousands of deadly shrubs and vines; should stock it with ferocious beasts and poisonous reptiles; should take pains to put a few swamps in the neighborhood to breed malaria; should so arrange matters that the ground would occasionally open and swallow a few of his darlings; and besides all this, should establish a few volcanoes in the immediate vicinity that might at any moment overwhelm his children with rivers of fire? Suppose that this father neglected to tell his children which of the plants were deadly; that the reptiles were poisonous; fail to say anything about the earthquakes, and kept the volcano business a secret—would we pronounce him angel or fiend? And yet this is exactly what the orthodox God has done."

Well, what of it? Suppose he did? It proves nothing, but that he is not a kind father. But the question under discussion is not whether he is "an angel or a fiend," but whether he is God of Creation. The truth is that Col. Ingersoll is as mad as a March hare, and as crazy as a bed-bug. With his usual recklessness, he asserts what never has been, and never can be proven. There is no evidence that God did not impart to man the knowledge of what shrubs and reptiles were poisonous. Whatever

evidence there is, is exactly the other way. As to the earthquakes and volcanoes, I don't see that there was any great use for it, so far as the knowledge we have of them is of any use to us. With his usual blindness and habit of self-contradiction, he asserts that God did all these things as proof, not only that he did not do them, but that he does not exist. That beats Guiteau and the plea in the chaise case, where the man said the chaise was broken when he borrowed it, that it was sound when he returned it, and lastly, that he had never had it at all.

CHAPTER XVI.

SCIENCE has demonstrated that there was a time in the history of our earth when neither vegetable nor animal life did or could exist. Yet, as far back as human knowledge can reach, we find it teeming with both. How did they get here? They must have come either by creation by some superior power, which is the only rational hypothesis, or by some mysterious process, unexplained, inexplicable, and without a shadow of support from "positive evidence, analogy, or experience, without which," Col. Ingersoll says, "argument is simply impossible, and, at the very best, can amount only to a useless agitation of the air." Yet one of these plans we are compelled to adopt by "that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance called faith," and which he so often denounces as the essence of slavery. It is the office of reason to examine and determine which of these two plans furnishes the best foundation for "faith."

The great majority of mankind has adopted the first; Col. Ingersoll, rejecting with scorn the idea of creation, and seeing the necessity of accounting for the existence of vegetable and animal life on the earth, summons what he calls nature to his aid, and, while denying to her the power to create, invests her with greater powers than are necessary for the creation of matter, by assuming that she has, "without intention," worked mere dead,

inert, unintelligent matter into life and intellect ; I will not say soul, because he does not believe in such a thing.

I propose to examine some of what he may consider his arguments against creation ; though there is necessarily very little to do in that line, as he has, inadvertently perhaps, acknowledged the worthlessness of his principal stock in trade when he said, in reply to Judge Black, "The mind of every thoughtful man is forced to one of these two conclusions : either that the universe is self-existent, or that it was created by a self-existent being." For it may be admitted that the God of Creation is cruel and tyrannical, and created men purely for the pleasure of inflicting pain and misery upon them, without furnishing any evidence that He did not create the universe ; in proof of which these charges constitute the staple of what Col. Ingersoll calls his arguments.

He seems, then, to be settled in the opinion that he came up from the lower animals. Perhaps he has some inner consciousness which informs him as to the race to which he belongs, as he says, "Man cannot conceive of anything utterly unlike what he has seen or felt." He has doubtless seen many monkeys ; it is not likely that he ever *saw* one changed into a man, but he may, for aught that I know, *feel* some of the monkey in him, and may, therefore, conceive that he belongs to that tribe. How many he has succeeded, or will succeed, in convincing that he "*came up*" from the lower animals, I cannot guess, but it is my opinion, as I have said, that his lectures will convince multitudes that if he did not *come up* from them, he is rapidly gravitating down to them ; and, perhaps, it is of little consequence by what means he shall

establish the kinship of which he seems to be *so* proud.

He does not tell us how the lower animals originated, and if he attempts it, he finds science dead against him. Science tells us that, according to nature, there is neither vegetable nor animal life without a preëxistent parent ; it also tells us that this earth was, for an unknown period, a molten mass ; heat that liquefies rocks and metals, dissipates all organic matter, and destroys all life, vegetable and animal. Whence, then, was this earth supplied with vegetable and animal life ? There is no answer to this but that they were created by God, the father and maker of all.

I have said, that when it is admitted that there was a time when neither vegetable nor animal life did or could exist upon the earth, Col. Ingersoll has nothing of the known from which to reason in support of his assertion that what he calls nature has produced all or any of the vegetable and animal life that now exists ; and, without that, there is no escape from the conclusion that they were all created by a power superior to nature.

Col. Ingersoll ought at least to have furnished us with some proof as to the means by which that skulless vertebrate from which he thinks he and Shakespeare sprung came into existence. But he didn't; and in all the flights of his imagination I have not found anything like an argument, founded upon "positive evidence, analogy, or experience," to prove that what he calls nature can produce animal or vegetable life ; and until he can prove that, by the clearest evidence, it is vain to deny the existence of a "power superior to nature." Of course, he is abun-

dant in his assertions of her power. He says, for example, "Beyond nature man cannot go, even in thought—above nature he cannot rise—below nature he cannot fall." A very pretty set of words, but my intellect is too obtuse to understand what he means by them, unless it is that no one man can be any better or worse than any other man, and that, therefore, Washington and Arnold, Garfield and Guiteau, stand upon the same plane. If that is what he means, the assertion is true, provided some others that he makes are true, as I shall show hereafter.

CHAPTER XVII.

LET us examine now some of his attempts at what he considers reasoning. He says, "Every effect must have had a cause, and every cause must have been an effect; therefore, there could have been no first cause." But, he says, "matter existed from eternity." Now, upon his own showing, here is an "effect without a cause." Now, if matter existed from eternity, it existed without a cause; and if, as Col. Ingersoll contends, everything, even to intellect, sprung from it under the manipulation of nature, it must be the "first cause."

Let us take another example, premising that he never hesitates to assert anything when it suits his present purpose, and to deny it when it suits another. He says, "Suppose, for the sake of the argument, that there is no being superior to nature, and that matter and force have existed from eternity. Now, suppose that two atoms should come together, would there be an effect? Yes. Suppose they came in exactly opposite directions with equal force, they would be stopped, to say the least." Stop here, Col. Ingersoll, yourself. If they were stopped for even the smallest conceivable length of time they would be in a state of rest. Yet, on the very next page you say, "In the whole universe there is not even one atom in a state of rest." He proceeds: "This would be an effect. If this be so, then you have matter, force,

and effect, without a being superior to nature. Now, suppose that two other atoms, just like the first two—” Stop, again : this is not a supposable thing, for you say, “Do we not know that there are no two persons alike in the whole world ? No two trees, no two leaves ; no two anythings that are alike ?” We will finish the sentence —“should come together under precisely the same circumstances, would not the effect be exactly the same ? Yes. Like cause producing like effects is what we mean by law and order. Then, we have matter, force, effect, law, and order, without a being superior to nature.” Now, we know that “every effect must also be a cause, and that every cause must be an effect.” We know no such thing, for it is not true. Whatever effect is produced by any cause is due entirely to that cause, and when the effect is fully accomplished it is at an end ; other causes may come in and, operating upon the effect already produced, may produce other effects, but the first effect is simply a result and not a cause. I extinguish my lamp, and it causes darkness in my room ; the cause and the effect are both at an end ; the darkness causes nothing. I supply a given amount of heat to a piece of iron, upon which it produces certain effects ; when they are fully accomplished they are at an end, and the iron, if kept at the same temperature, will, so far as we know anything of physical laws, remain in the same condition to eternity unless some other cause be brought to operate upon it.

But he proceeds : “The atoms coming together did produce an effect, and as every effect must also be a cause, the effect produced by the collision of the atoms must, as to something else, have been a cause. Then we have

matter, force, law, order, cause, and effect, without a being superior to nature. Nothing is left for the supernatural but empty space."

Did ever any sane man attempt to foist upon people of common sense such a jumble of nonsense as sound reasoning, or indeed as reasoning of any sort? I see that Guiteau says his head bulges very much to one side. I suppose that accounts for it. In his reply to Judge Black, he says: "It will not do to prove your premises by assertions and then claim that your conclusions are correct because they agree with your premises." Col. Ingersoll does more than that. He first assumes the thing that he is required to prove. Then he assumes several things which he supposes might happen provided his first assumption is correct, several of which he has denied on other occasions; yet he has furnished no evidence that any of them would happen, nor any reason why they should. Admitting that they all might happen, provided there were "no being superior to nature," all that it could prove is that they might happen, provided there is "no being superior to nature," without furnishing a shadow of either evidence or argument against the existence of such a being.

No wonder that his "head bulges out very much one side." Such drivel and nonsense and so much of it is enough to make any head "bulge to one side," especially if it is a little soft. Whether the drivel and nonsense are attributable to the bulge, or the bulge to them, I will not undertake to determine.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IF we had nothing but dead, inert, unintelligent matter to guide us it would be impossible for the human intellect to determine whether the universe existed from eternity, or was created by a self-existent being. It is true, there is in the greatness and grandeur of the universe, and in the evidence of intelligent design, strong testimony in favor of the latter ; but all this might be met, as it is, by the assertion, that all this is the work of nature.

But science, upon which Col. Ingersoll professes to rely with such implicit faith for the final destruction of the idea of a God of Creation, has raised up against atheism obstacles which it is impossible to surmount. We have no means of knowing when the universe began to exist, nor when this earth was formed ; but science has brought to us incontestable evidence that in the history of the existence of our earth there was a time when there was upon it neither vegetable nor animal life, and when neither could by any possibility exist. We know, therefore, that these had a beginning, and that they could not have been produced, or rather created, by any of what we know as the operations of nature. It follows, therefore, of necessity, that they must have been created ; and creation is omnipotence ; and unless they can prove that what they call nature has produced these things, the question is settled.

Col. Ingersoll says, "Nature is but an endless series of efficient causes ; she cannot create, but she eternally transforms. There was no beginning, and there can be no end." But we know there was a beginning of animal and vegetable life.

Further, he says, "Nature, so far as we can discern, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever. She neither weeps nor rejoices. She produces man without purpose, and obliterates without regret. She knows no distinction between the beneficial and the hurtful. Poison and nutrition, pain and joy, life and death, smiles and tears, are alike to her ; she is neither merciful nor cruel. She cannot be flattered by worship, nor melted by tears. She does not know even the attitude of prayer. She appreciates no difference between the poison in the fangs of snakes and mercy in the hearts of men."

A very nice gathering of antitheses ; a pretty stringing together of words without sense or meaning. It gives us no idea of what nature is. Just read over carefully Col. Ingersoll's enunciation of the character and action of the nature he has made, and see if you can extract from it a particle of sense. It would be just as sensible to say, "A stick or a stone, so far as we can discern, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever. It neither weeps nor rejoices," etc.

We hear a great deal about "the laws of nature, the works of nature," etc. These are very convenient terms to draw the mind of man away from the recognition and contemplation of the power and wisdom of God, and to rob Him of His glory. But there are no such things.

Nature never made a law, nor did any work. God makes all the laws and does all the work through those laws. He has impressed his laws upon all matter, these laws govern and control it, are the important part of its being, form its distinctive characteristics, and make it what it is.

In the creation of vegetable life, He made it the law of its being that it should produce roots, stems, leaves and flowers, and seed to reproduce itself "after its kind." Perhaps we had as well call these results the "nature" of vegetable life as any other name; but here are evidences of "intention," which prove that they are not the work of Col. Ingersoll's "nature," which "without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever."

In the creation of animal life He incorporated into it laws which constitute the essence of its being, and without which it could not be what it is. These laws constitute and maintain the identity of all the various forms of animal life, and point to and provide for the manner of the life He intended for each to pursue and enjoy.

Col. Ingersoll perceives no evidence of intention in the law which covers with hair or wool or fur those animals that live upon land, and covers with feathers and provides with wings those which move in the air, and in both cases makes the covering heavier in winter and lighter in summer.

These laws, incorporated into and constituting the being of animal and vegetable life, are the laws which God has made "absolute, eternal, and inexorable." And it is because He has made these laws "absolute, eternal, and inexorable," and has given man the ability to discover what they are, and that this is their "nature," that

we are enabled to live. We know that God has made it the "absolute, eternal, and inexorable law" of the existence of wheat that it shall produce wheat. We know, therefore, that when we sow wheat we shall, by the operation of this "absolute, eternal law," get wheat in return.

Knowing these laws, which God has impressed upon all matter as a part of its being, and knowing that they are "absolute, eternal, and inexorable," we can avail ourselves of them in ways without number for our benefit. But suppose we had to rely upon Col. Ingersoll's nature, which, "without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever," we must always move in darkness and uncertainty. We might sow wheat, and "nature" might so "transform and retransform" it as to produce thistles; we might plant corn and it might produce thorns; then, indeed, might we calculate that we might occasionally "gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles."

CHAPTER XIX.

It will, perhaps, be well to look into the evidence of this great power which Col. Ingersoll ascribes to nature. Voltaire, Paine, and others, in their ignorance, superstition, and feebleness of intellect, were unable to account for the existence of the universe upon any other ground than that there was a God of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, who had created the universe and impressed upon all things certain fixed and invariable laws by which they were governed, called the laws of nature, and endowed man with intellect to discover and power to perform all things necessary to his happiness and well-being.

They attacked Christianity upon the grounds, chiefly, that revelation and miracles were impossible, because they were violations of these fixed laws ; and that many who called themselves Christians were very bad men. Nevertheless, Christianity did not perish from their assaults, but continued to prosper and gather strength.

But Col. Ingersoll, or somebody for him, has discovered that the recognition of the existence of a being with power to create and give laws to the universe is irretrievably fatal to the assertion that "revelation and miracles are impossible," because the existence of such a power necessarily includes the power to change or suspend those laws at will. All argument, therefore, based upon impossibility, of necessity falls to the ground, and affords not

a particle of evidence against revelation or Christianity, unless he can prove there is no God. But Col. Ingersoll has determined to root Christianity out of the world, and, however much he may be wanting in intellect and proof for the accomplishment of his purpose, his courage, and, if he will not be offended, I will say his "faith," are equal to the emergency; and, perhaps, from the fear that somebody will get ahead of him and "give his glory to another," he boldly jumps to the conclusion, which Darwin and others have for years vainly labored to establish, "that there is no God." He says in his reply to Judge Black: "The universe, according to my idea, is, always was, and forever will be. It did not 'come into being,' it is the one eternal being—the only thing that ever did, does, or can exist." The term universe, of course, embraces everything that exists. So far as we know, of all the worlds in existence, ours is the only one in which vegetable and animal life and intellect exist; and we know that none of these were always here. But Col. Ingersoll's devices are not yet exhausted. He lugs in to his aid what he calls nature, and while denying her the power to create, finds it necessary to invest her with it; for having nothing but dead, unintelligent matter with which to work, it will pass his powers of invention to explain how she can impart to it life and intellect without creating them. He says, "Nature, so far as we can discern, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms and retransforms forever." Then, of course, all that she does is mere accident while she is forming and transforming; there is no guessing what she is going to form; it may turn out—well, just anything or nothing.

Let us examine into this "forming, transforming and retransforming." She gathers up atoms of matter and goes to transforming. She has no "intention" as to what she will form ; it may be a vegetable, or an animal. Does she first make an oak full grown, or just a shrub, or an acorn ? We have no idea which it will be until it is finished, nor has nature ; and it may turn out to be neither, but something else. Her work may even fizzle out to nothing.

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CHAPTER XX.

ÆSOP, in one of his fables, tells of a traveler who was recounting to a crowd the wonderful things he had seen and the great exploits he had performed in his travels : among other things, in relating his own exploits, he said he had won the prize at Rhodes by a leap of forty feet. An old man then said to him : “ If you leaped forty feet at Rhodes you can do it here ; and if you will do it you will convince us that all the rest you have told us may be true.”

Now, I have Col. Ingersoll and nature just where those people had the traveler from Rhodes. If nature has done half, or a thousandth part of the great things he claims for her, she can do a few of the small things just to satisfy our curiosity, and to convince us that Col. Ingersoll tells the truth. Let us try her on a few small things.

Suppose we try her skill and power upon an acorn ; and we will not put her to the trouble of running about to gather up the atoms wherever she can find them and bringing them together. We will supply her with a good, sound acorn, that if planted will vegetate and make a tree ; we will grind it up into powder and set nature to work upon the atoms, to form, or transform them back into a good, sound, live acorn as it was. I wonder how long Col. Ingersoll thinks it would take her to accomplish it. Certainly, with all the atoms collected ready to her hand, it

would be a much easier task than if she had to hunt and gather them all up. But we will be content with a milder test of her powers. We will just put the acorn into boiling water for ten minutes. Now here are all the atoms gathered together and put into proper shape ; all that we will require of her is to restore its vitality.

Perhaps she would prefer to test her powers upon a man. Well, suppose that, as sometimes happens, a man should, instead of turning off the gas in his room at night, blow it out, and should in the morning be found dead from suffocation. Now here is the man with all the bones, flesh, muscles, nerves, blood, and hair, all the atoms here gathered together and arranged together in proper order, the whole machinery ready to go to work ; nothing lacking but a little vitality. Can't nature, with her wonderful power of forming, transforming, and retransforming, supply that little deficiency more easily than to build up the whole machinery from dead, inert matter, or from a little speck of jelly, or even from "a skulless vertebrate in the dim Laurentian seas ?" What has nature transformed ? Has she ever transformed an oak into a pine, or a pine into a poplar ? Has she ever transformed a horse into a cow, a hog into a sheep, or even a flea into a fly ? Has she ever transformed a peach into a pear, an apple into a plum, or even a turnip into a potato ? There is not a particle of evidence that nature has ever transformed one vegetable or one animal into another. Cultivation, or the want of it, may improve or deteriorate a vegetable so as to make great changes in its appearance and quality, but its great controlling characteristics are unchanged. Care and abundance of food may greatly

improve the size, appearance, and strength of the horse or cow, or any other animal, and the want of these may produce opposite effects; but the animal remains the same. It never gets to be another animal.

Darwin says that he has produced a great variety of pigeons, but he does not as yet claim that he has, with all his means, science, and effort, succeeded in changing one into a hawk or a chicken; they are all pigeons still. He has changed the color of their feathers and to some extent their forms, but he and nature both together have never been able to make anything but pigeons out of them.

Failing to find on land anything to sustain them, the atheists take to the water to hunt for evidence. Some of them (and I believe Darwin does) derive all life, vegetable and animal, from little specks of jelly which they say were originally found in the water, and which they call protoplasm. I believe that is the name. These specks they say have life, and that from them has sprung all life, vegetable and animal. They don't tell us exactly how they came there, nor how or where they got life, nor what evidence they have that they ever got to be men, for the existence of man dates too far back for their personal knowledge, and the most ancient records furnish no account of it. And besides, they seem to forget that the water of the primeval seas, in which they claim that these living specks originated, had been existing under a degree of heat in which life could not exist; and, as we know of no life anywhere but on our earth, there was no place from which it could come; in fact there was then no life. And although we are told that all water now

teems with life, I believe it was Agassiz who exploded by experiment the idea of the spontaneous production of life in water that has been boiled and excluded from the air.

Col. Ingersoll claims kindred with the lower animals only through the "skulless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas, vertebrates wiggling without knowing why they wiggled and swimming without knowing where they were going," and, of course, through the monkey and the negro. I don't care to trace his pedigree back to the speck of jelly, but if we could fairly get at it, it would be a curious and perhaps an amusing employment to watch the steps and grades by which he "came up." We are not informed as to the number of transformations he had to undergo between a "skulless vertebrate in the dim Laurentian seas" and a man; but supposing the first to be a fish, it is probable that he may have been a little shark. If he had happened to get to be a snake, what a venomous reptile he must have been; if in his travels he got to be a pole-cat what a stench he might have raised as he whisked his perfume about; if he had got up amongst the canine race, he would doubtless have been a fierce bloodhound, and a vicious devil; if he had passed on to a hyena, what an infernally fiendish laugh he would have shrieked out over the spoils of the grave; if he got to be a bull, how he would have bellowed and cavorted; and when he got to the last known stage of a monkey, what a malicious, capering, grinning, chattering little fellow he would have made! I say the last known stage, because, though it seems to be settled that there is but one stage between the monkey and the man, they seem not

yet to have discovered the missing link. It is possible it may be the *Guyascutus*, said to be a nondescript animal, about half monkey and half man, or something like that proportion, which nobody has ever yet been allowed to see.

Perhaps I can help Col. Ingersoll and his sect to account for their inability to find it heretofore, and make some suggestions by which they may overcome the whole difficulty by bringing some of them to light.

Let us imagine Col. Ingersoll, for instance, as he was in this state of transition from the monkey. I suppose he would be about four feet and a half high, provided he could stand erect, but as his hind legs have not yet grown straight, perhaps he would not be more than four feet. His tail would be an inch, an inch and a half or two inches long, according to the progress he had made; little pieces of it would be dropping off occasionally, which would keep it raw in appearance; his head would be flat on the top; as his jaw-bones would be a little shortened, his lips would be protruding and very thick, his nose elevated about a quarter of an inch and flat and short, having not yet developed between the eyes; there might be some rudiments of fingers on his fore and of toes on his hind feet; his body would be marked by naked spots and streaks, while the balance would be covered with hair; of course, he would be very black. Having lost the instinct of the brute and not yet acquired the reason of the man—in fact, having lost all that was available to the monkey and acquired nothing available to the man—he would be a hideous sample of the one, and but a miserable caricature of the other, and of course utterly helpless. His mother would of course conceal him in the

most secluded place she could find, and care for and protect him, until he should either die or develop into the very lowest type of the negro. Hence they have never been found.

If Col. Ingersoll will fit out an expedition into Africa, and make diligent search in places the most secluded and difficult of access, he may possibly discover plenty of them ; and what a triumph that would be ! And failing in that, if he will take along plenty of Doctor Ramrod's Tincture of Gridiron, he may succeed in rapidly changing all the monkeys into negroes, and in the course of time into white people. I respectfully recommend this plan to his careful consideration.

CHAPTER XXI.

SEEING that "Nature forms, transforms, and retransforms forever," it is somewhat remarkable that neither Col. Ingersoll nor any of his co-workers has attempted to explain to us the process by which this evolution goes on, nor how it is that it stops at so many different stages. By what law of nature it is that these little pieces of jelly, something smaller than the point of a needle, evolve, one until it gets to be a "skulless vertebrate in the dim Laurentian seas," and stops; another goes on until it becomes a snake and stops; another a fish, one a dove, and another a hawk, or an eagle; that in the course of time one gets to be a lamb and another a lion, one an elephant and another a whale.

Col. Ingersoll begs and implores for a miracle. I will show him one. He says, "We are told that nature has a superior. Let this superior for one single instant control nature, and we will admit the truth of your assertions." He says, "Nature forms, transforms, and retransforms forever," and that "the laws of nature are absolute, eternal, inexorable." Now, whatever she may have done in the beginning of time in the way of transforming, it is certain that she has not, in the knowledge of man, transformed one vegetable or one animal into another. Have the laws of nature been stopped by a superior? If they have, there's a miracle. Or has she

quit the business? It is one or the other, and in either case, according to Col. Ingersoll, there is a superior.

Let it be borne in mind that Col. Ingersoll's arguments, as I suppose he calls them, against the existence of a God of Creation are, first, that his moral character is bad, which I have shown has nothing to do with the question. Second, that everything is done sometimes by nature, sometimes by the eternal, inexorable laws of nature, and sometimes without any law. What does he know about the laws of nature? Let us catechise him a little.

Suppose you could give a train of a hundred loaded cars a speed of a hundred miles a minute on a railroad, and were to approach a curve without abating the speed, what would be the result? Why that, according to all that we know of the laws of motion, it would keep straight on and jump the track; the speed of the engine would be greatly abated the moment it struck the ground, and the cars would be hurled against it and against each other with a force that in the twinkling of an eye would reduce everything to a solid mass of ruin. But here is this immense amount of matter composing our earth, with no track to guide, no flanges to hold it in place, careering through space in a curved line around the sun with the speed of a thousand miles a minute, turning the curves with the ease and grace with which a ship obedient to her helm makes a curve in smooth water, never swerving a hair's-breadth from her course, and never failing to keep her appointed time to the second.

But Col. Ingersoll is never at a loss for a demonstration to suit his purpose of his own or somebody else's. He says, "It has been demonstrated that the earth

would fall into the sun only for the fact, that it is attracted by other worlds." Well, that's something like the kitchen-maid's troubles about the prospective burning of her prospective son. Who demonstrated it, and how? What reason was there for demonstrating it? I suppose the idea struck some fellow, that some of these days the attraction of the sun for the earth might get so strong that it would drag us in and burn us up, and therefore it behooved him to invent some reason why it had not been done heretofore, and could not be done hereafter. It did not occur to him that God had arranged all this long ago, and so he concludes that nature has put some other worlds away off yonder, to enter into a contest with the sun for us, and what a patch-work he or nature has made of it!

According to this idea nature made a bad job of it at the start, and when she found out her mistake, not having sense enough to fix up our solar system, so that it could manage its own business, she had to run away off into space, to hunt up some other world to prevent the sun burning us up.

How did the earth get into its place? This would be a very useless question if addressed to a man who believes in a God, because we know that he would answer at once that God put it there, but how, we do not know. But those who ascribe everything to nature and her laws must show that everything is within her power, and consistent with her laws. There must be no contradictory and conflicting laws. I repeat, therefore, "How did the earth get into her place?" Did madam, or miss, nature take it in her hand and put it exactly in the right place, and

give it exactly the right send-off in its course? Attraction is one of the great reliances of these sons of nature, to do everything and explain everything. Has it ever occurred to them what a delicate thing this is, so far as we know anything about it. Take a smoothly polished piece of iron and put it on a smooth plate of glass, then slowly approach a magnet to it; there is a point at which the magnet will not move the iron, and from which, if you move it the thousandth part of an inch nearer, the iron will begin to move to it; and the nearer it comes, the greater will be the velocity and force with which it moves to the iron.

Now, suppose that when the earth was floating about in space and first came within the influence of the attraction of the sun, it was but one mile farther off than it is now. A body falling to the earth moves sixteen feet the first second, thirty-two feet the next, forty-eight feet the third, and so on, with accelerated velocity, and therefore with increasing momentum every second. In falling that one mile towards the sun, it would have acquired an almost inconceivable velocity and momentum, as science tells us that the power of attraction increases as the square of the distance diminishes. Now, will Col. Ingersoll, or some of his demonstrators, tell us by what law of nature the earth would have stopped just at the end of that mile? On the contrary, we know that for it to have stopped there would have been a direct violation of all the laws of motion of which we have any knowledge.

Col. Ingersoll says, "It has been calculated by one of the best mathematicians and astronomers of the age," that to stop the earth when turning round at the rate of

a thousand miles an hour would cause as much heat as it would take to burn a lump of solid coal three times as big as the globe."

Then, what must have been the amount of heat generated by stopping the earth at exactly the right place, from a velocity of a thousand miles a minute? I don't understand how the calculation was made, as I am neither a mathematician nor an astronomer; the result arrived at may, or may not be correct; it is given by Col. Ingersoll as evidence that the earth could not have been stopped in its diurnal revolution for the accommodation of Joshua, to give him time to finish up the slaughter of the Amorites before dark. If it is good for that, it is good to prove that the earth in its journey to the sun could not have stopped just at the right place and time without producing a heat that would have sent it off into gas. But let us look a little farther at Col. Ingersoll's hyfaluting nonsense about the attraction of the earth by other worlds in order to keep us out of the clutches of the sun. When I was a school-boy, science said that the earth was ninety-five millions of miles from the sun; now it has got the distance to a little over ninety-three millions. If Col. Ingersoll's theory be true, it may be that these outside worlds that have been appointed to take care of us have got tired of watching us and neglected their duty, so that we may have actually started to fall into the sun and got two millions of miles on our way, but we will wait and see.

For the present we will assume that science, which is always infallible, is right as to the ninety-three millions of miles. In that case science proves that the

earth is a hundred and eighty-six millions of miles nearer to these great outside worlds when it is on one side of the sun than when it is on the other side. I believe that science says that the force of attraction between two bodies is inversely as the square of the distance between them. That is to say, if you put two bodies which attract each other one inch apart the force of attraction would be sixteen times greater than when you put them four inches apart. Now, when the earth is on the side of the sun next to the attracting world, it must be attracted just exactly enough to prevent her from going to the sun, no more, no less, for if it is a hundredth part of an ounce too much, it would bring the earth nearer to it, by which its power of attraction would be increased, while that of the sun would be proportionally diminished; consequently the earth would begin to move towards the attracting world; slowly at first, but with a constantly accelerated velocity and force, and we should soon find ourselves in a hot chase after the attracting world. Perhaps some great mathematician or astronomer may be able to calculate how long it would take us to catch it.

Admit that the contending forces should be exactly right while the earth is between the sun and the attracting world, how would it be when the earth got on the other side, a hundred and eighty-six millions of miles away from the attracting world, with the sun exactly between them? Why, clearly, that its attractive force, though greatly diminished, instead of being opposed to that of the sun, would be added to it, and the necessary result would be that the earth would rush right into the sun.

Or do Col. Ingersoll and his demonstrators hold that

nature has set apart and appointed one of these immense worlds, said by science to be almost infinitely greater than our earth, as a sort of nurse, with nothing to do but to keep chasing around the sun after us to prevent us from falling into the fire ?

Or perhaps they think that nature has stationed around a dozen or more of these great world nurses to look after and take care of us, so that when the attracting force of one becomes too weak from distance, another shall be ready to take us in charge.

Now, the truth is, they know nothing about it. They cannot tell how all these great worlds are hung and sustained in space ; nor can they explain or comprehend how it is that they do not get into a general and universal confusion, by running up against each other. They have discovered by observation that the earth and the other planets revolve around the sun, and invariably in the same courses and the same times ; they can, therefore, calculate exactly where they will be at any given time, and their relative positions to each other. By the aid of trigonometry they can measure their dimensions and distances, but there is nothing within the reach of the human intellect that can explain how they got their start, nor how they were put in motion, nor how they were kept in their places. The only rational solution of these things is that they are the work of an omnipotent intelligence.

It is attributed to the attraction of gravitation. There is not a particle of evidence to support the assertion. It is claimed that Sir Isaac Newton discovered this from speculating upon the reason of the fall of an apple. He did no such thing. Everybody in the world, and that ever

had been in it, knew that any body will fall to the ground unless it is held up by something. That is all that Newton knew about it. He knew the fact, just as everybody else did, but the cause of it he knew no more than a horse or Col. Ingersoll. The only explanation of it is that God made it so.

Newton gave it a name, and assumed, and perhaps properly, that it is a property of all matter ; and formerly it was held that the earth was drawn to the sun by the attraction of gravitation, and was prevented from falling into it by centrifugal force, and from flying off by centripetal force ; but matter at rest has neither centrifugal nor centripetal force ; and nobody has ever yet been able to tell how the earth got started in its course around the sun exactly in the right time and exactly in the right place, nor how it has been and is kept there.

Supposing it to have been wandering about somewhere in the regions of space, and coming within the sphere of the attraction of the sun, it would, according to all that we know of the properties of matter and attraction, and of the laws governing them, have gone directly to it without attempting to fly off at a tangent.

If all these great worlds were to run together into one big pile, it might be readily accounted for upon the assumption that they had been drawn together by the attraction of gravitation ; but gravitation cannot account for the fact that every one of the countless worlds keeps its own regular courses and times.

God arranged it all, and keeps them all in order by his own laws, incomprehensible by, and inexplicable to, our intellects.

According to Col. Ingersoll's ideas, there is and has always been going on a contest between some of these great, far-off worlds and the sun, as to which shall have us. Who knows but that, one of these days, if there should happen to be the least bit of a jostling, we may find ourselves traveling off at the rate of a million of miles a minute, after one of these great big worlds, untold millions of miles off in space.

And what will Col. Ingersoll and his scientists do about these comets with their tails forty millions of miles long? It is just as much as the sun and these outside great worlds can do to keep the earth where she belongs. According to Col. Ingersoll's laws of nature, half an ounce either way would send her off kiting nobody can tell where. Scientists say that there have been all the summer half a dozen of these tramps of comets prowling around about us, much nearer than any of these great worlds that are keeping watch over us to keep us out of the ravenous maw of the sun, and now they say there is another one just come. Perhaps these tramps are prowling around watching for a chance to run off with us. That they should come out in such crowds, looks as if they mean mischief. While the sun and the great outside worlds are contending for us, each exerting all its power, and each barely able to hold its own, may not one of these eccentric fellows just slip in and take us to itself?

“The lion and the unicorn fighting for the crown,
Up jumps the little dog, and knocks them both down.”

But, even if they are without any evil intent or hostile

purpose, they seem to be so reckless in their movements, that the inhabitants of the earth have always more or less dreaded that they might in their carelessness be destructive to us, and if Col. Ingersoll's ideas are correct about nature's bungling or ignorant work in making our safety dependent upon some far-off world, about which we know nothing, it may be possible that one of these comets may in some of its tantrums get in here amongst us, and so derange the equilibrium of attraction, that we may soon find ourselves burnt up by the sun or taking a winter's trip to one of those great worlds.

By observation, men can and do discover the existence of a great many things and their relations to, and their influences upon, each other, and this is Science; but, when scientists go to hunting about for ultimate causes outside of the omnipotence and omniscience of God, they grope and blunder in darkness and ignorance. They can see the motions of the planets, and it is as easy to say that they are governed by attraction as anything else. It would be just as easy to say they were governed by fate, by electricity, or magnetism; for, as nobody knows any more about it than they do, nobody can successfully contradict them; everybody can see that they move regularly, and that is all that anybody knows, or in our present state of existence can know about it.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN order to establish any cause for anything that we know to exist, we must prove, first, that such alleged cause is adequate to the production of the whole effect; second, we must have positive evidence of the existence and action of the cause, and the absence of all other causes; or, third, we must establish both the existence and action of the cause by proving that nothing else could have produced the effect.

Sometimes scientific men in their anxiety to discover the causes of existing phenomena, assume as causes things the claim of which cannot be sustained by this test. Amongst these, in my opinion, is the story that the tides are caused by the attraction of the moon.

Col. Ingersoll no doubt accepts that theory in full "by that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance called faith."

Let us examine the grounds upon which this theory stands. In the first place, there is no evidence that the attraction of the moon is adequate to the production of the phenomena of the tides; and, therefore, there can be no evidence that it does produce them, unless it can be proved that they could not possibly be produced by any other cause. The truth is, the whole strength of the argument is opposed to the assumption that this attraction is adequate to the production of the results at-

tributed to it. The only facts in favor of it are, first, that all bodies attract each other; second, that the moon is nearer to the earth than any other body; and, third, that the tides rise and fall at certain stages of the moon. This last is the most plausible of the reasons in support of the claim, but, without other evidence, is of no value, because coincidence is alone neither causation nor the evidence of it. And as (in common parlance) the moon goes around the earth every day, and the tides rise every day, there is, so far as I can see, no reason why the tides might not rise and fall as well at one stage of the moon as another.

The theory is that the moon by its power of attraction drags the water after it, until it piles it up very high in some places and very little in others. Formerly it was, I believe, stated that the tides rose to the height of sixty feet in the Bay of Fundy.

Let us see whether in accordance with well-established laws the attraction of the moon is adequate to the production of these effects.

I believe it is settled beyond all question that between two bodies which attract each other the attraction is inversely as the square of the distance. If this be true, there is an end to the argument; for, when we take into consideration the relative sizes of the earth and the moon, and the relative distances at which they act upon the water, there is no escape from the conclusion that the force exerted upon the water by the moon is so infinitesimal, compared with that exerted by the earth, that it could not appreciably affect, much less, that it could exert the almost inconceivable amount of force necessary

to lift millions of tons twenty feet above its ordinary level, and that, too, in opposition to the attraction of the earth. One of two things is settled beyond controversy, either that it is not true that the power of attraction between two bodies is inversely as the square of the distance, or that the tides are not due to the attraction of the moon. But there is another difficulty in the way. When the moon has lifted water twenty feet, the diminution of distance has increased its power and diminished that of the earth; it ought, therefore, to continue to carry it on till it gets it to herself, but instead of that, she lets it go, and drops it. Why is that? By the way, let us inquire something about this thing called attraction. What is it? Is it matter which the moon sends out to pick up our water and carry it off? If so, what becomes of it when it lets the water loose? Does it return to the moon, or does it mingle with our water and remain with us? If so, we shall at last get the whole of the moon. If it is not matter, what is it?

There is another difficulty. If the moon has the power to pick up and carry about such an immense weight of water, she has power to lift up lighter things upon the surface of the earth, and she would be constantly carrying them off. She would carry off our atmosphere and our clouds, but we never hear of her doing any such things.

But there is still another difficulty. The theory does not account for the phenomena of the tides. The motions of the moon are regular and so are those of the earth; and those of the tides ought to be, and would be, if the theory be correct; but they are not. They vary greatly in height, not only at different places, but at the

same place. There are four tides a day at some places, and but two at others, and only one at others, and at others scarcely any. They vary also in their times, so that they cannot be predicted exactly.

There are thousands of very intelligent people all over the country who believe that the particular phase of the moon in which hogs are killed or seeds planted exerts an important influence upon results. Perhaps it has not occurred to them that this is due to the moon's attraction, nor, so far as I am informed, have they, by the aid of Algebra, spherical trigonometry and fluxions, ever demonstrated the truth of their theory, but they claim to have established its truth by experiment. This theory science derides as the offspring of ignorance and superstition, as if it were not just as easy for the moon by her power of attraction to extract the juices out of a piece of meat, or the germinating or productive power out of a little seed, as to lift up and throw about at her will millions of tons of water.

Doubtless science could demonstrate that the Gulf Stream and other ocean currents are produced by the moon, but for the unreasonable obstinacy with which they pursue their courses without regard to her attractions.

In view of all these things it is strange that scientific men have not looked to something more potent and substantial than the imaginary attraction of the moon as a cause for the production of such wonderful results. It is still more strange, when an all-sufficient cause was plain and at their feet.

Nearly forty years ago I saw a rude machine, conceived

and constructed by an obscure farmer, by which he demonstrated beyond all doubt, that the tides are produced by the diurnal rotation of the earth on its axis. His machine produced the high tides at the places where they are high, and the low ones where they are low, the Gulf-stream, and even the maelstrom on the coast of Norway.

He was then on his way to Washington to patent his machine, and I heard no more of it. It was at the time when the whole country was struggling to gather up some of the fragments of the fortunes that had been wrecked by the crash of eighteen hundred and thirty-seven, and had neither the time nor the spirit to devote their attention to such subjects.

Occasionally I have thought of it as a matter of great interest and importance to science, and within the present year I instituted inquiries in reference to it and learned that he had secured a patent, and had also written a book upon the subject, but had died before he had been able to do anything with the machine or publish his book. Upon application at the patent office I found his specifications filed with his application and copies of his drawings, but was informed that the model had been burnt by the fire which occurred in the office a few years ago.

I have introduced the matter here with the hope that it may come under the notice of some scientific man, who will take interest enough in it to induce him to investigate it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

COL. INGERSOLL commences his onslaught upon the gods, by saying "Each nation has created a god, and the god always resembled his creators." As to one of these statements, there is no evidence to sustain it ; as to the other, the facts are against it. So far as we know, or can know, anything about it, the belief in the existence of a God is co-equal with the existence of man. We have nothing from history or tradition that they ever existed apart ; it is not, therefore, unreasonable to assume that this belief was created with him, or that the knowledge was imparted by his Creator, provided he was created.

As to the statement "the god has always resembled the creator," there can be nothing farther from the truth, for all nations have invested their gods with omnipotence and omniscience, with whatever other attributes they may have ascribed to them.

He says "none of these gods could give any true account of the creation of this little earth." How does he know ? Can he render any sensible reason why such an account should be given ? I do not know, and therefore shall not attempt to explain, why we were constituted as we are, whether we were created by a power superior to nature, or brought up by nature from the "skulless vertebrates in the dim Laurentian seas," but it is beyond all cavil true that, constituted as we are, the first words in

the Bible, saying "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth," give us all the information on the subject that it is in the power of omnipotence to impart to us with our limited capacity. If there is fault in the matter, Col. Ingersoll must charge it to his goddess, nature, who "forms, transforms, and retransforms forever," because that in "forming, transforming, and retransforming" us from "the skulless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas," she stopped without giving us intellect to comprehend and understand everything, and without even giving him the power to "conceive of anything utterly unlike what he has seen or felt."

I very much doubt whether nature has been able to explain to him to his entire satisfaction the various processes and steps by which she transformed and retransformed him from "the skulless vertebrate" to his present condition. He probably don't remember to have "seen" them, as he passed him along "through all that crawls, and swims, and floats, and climbs, and walks, and finally produced the gentleman," as he is, and therefore can conceive of them only because he has "felt" them.

It is said that frequently, when people are visiting for the first time, as they suppose, some scene, they are at once impressed with an inexplicable, but irresistible conviction that they are not there for the first time, and that in the far, shadowy past, in another state of existence, everything around them has been familiar to them. If these impressions ever reach to a revelation of the state of existence which calls up these reminiscences, Col. Ingersoll may sometimes have found strange

experiences of the nature of the several animals he has had the honor to represent.

Col. Ingersoll adds another to the already numerous examples of the absurdities and inconsistencies into which even great intellects are involved when they are prostituted to the purpose of establishing and maintaining a position, rather than engaged in an honest search for the truth.

In his lecture on ghosts, he says: "In New England a woman was charged with being a witch and with having changed herself into a fox. While in that condition she was attacked and bitten by some dogs. A committee of three men, by order of the court, examined this woman. They removed her clothing and searched for 'witch spots.' That is to say, spots into which needles could be thrust without giving her pain. They reported to the court that such spots were found. She denied, however, that she had ever changed herself into a fox. Upon the report of the committee she was found guilty, and actually executed. This was done by our Puritan fathers, by the gentlemen who braved the dangers of the deep for the sake of worshiping God and persecuting their fellow men.

"In those days people believed in what was known as lycanthropy—that is, that persons with the assistance of the devil could assume the form of wolves. An instance is given where a man was attacked by a wolf. He defended himself and succeeded in cutting off one of the animal's paws. The wolf ran away. The man picked up the paw, put it in his pocket, and carried it home. There he found his wife with one of her hands gone. He took

the paw from his pocket. It had changed to a human hand. He charged his wife with being a witch. She was tried. She confessed her guilt and was burned."

The intelligent reader will perhaps be surprised on being told that in the face of his conviction that we have come up from "the skulless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas," Col. Ingersoll cited these instances as evidences of the gross ignorance and superstition into which people of those days were sunk. He evidently forgot himself, or was deliberately attempting to impose upon what he supposed was the ignorance of his hearers. These people believed, like him, in the transforming and re-transforming power of nature; only they called the transforming power by another name—the devil; mark it, Col. Ingersoll does not say that he does not believe that one woman was not turned into a fox and the other into a wolf; and he will hardly have the effrontery to say it. If a cunning woman who but a few stages back had been a fox, wanted to rob a hen-roost, couldn't nature re-transform her into a fox long enough to do it; or if a vicious, malignant one, who a few generations back had been a she wolf, proposed to give her husband a thrashing, couldn't nature retransform her into a she wolf for the occasion, as easily as she could transform a piece of jelly into a new elephant, or make Col. Ingersoll out of a monkey?

Naturalists say that all animals, man not excepted, sometimes, (I suppose by a law of nature,) breed back to some former ancestor. Suppose that in coming up from the skulless vertebrate, one of these women had passed through the fox stage and the other through the wolf

stage, would Col. Ingersoll contend that it would have required any great stretch of nature's retransforming power to put them back occasionally for a little time, or even permanently into their former condition of a few generations back ?

CHAPTER XXIV.

It cannot be denied that Col. Ingersoll is a hard subject to handle, not because he advances any even plausible argument against the existence of a God of Creation, but because he jumps so rapidly from one absurdity into another, that it is laborious to follow and expose them. He gets things mixed up into such inextricable confusion in his own mind, that he forgets at one time what he has said at another, and constantly contradicts himself. For example, by a course of bold assertion, without a particle of proof, he convinces himself that "there could have been no first cause." He forgets that he has said: "Nature is but an endless series of efficient causes." If she was endless, she must have existed from eternity, and of necessity must have been "a first cause."

He devotes a whole lecture to prove that the universe is governed by law. He closes his lecture upon Humboldt with the following pompous announcement: "The world is his monument; upon the eternal granite of her hills he inscribed his name, and there, upon everlasting stone, his genius wrote this the sublimest of truths:

"THE UNIVERSE IS GOVERNED BY LAW."

The capitals are his.

Well, admit all this, does it afford a shadow of evidence that God did not create the universe and ordain the laws by which it is governed.

Yet, after wasting a great many words to prove what, so far as I know, nobody of ordinary intelligence ever denied, what God has written in living light upon the face of all His works, and what Moses, or whoever wrote the Pentateuch, proclaimed to the world thousands of years ago, that the universe is governed by law, Col. Ingersoll turns around, and, if I understand the meaning of his words, denies that anything is governed by law. But he says so many things from which no meaning can be extracted, and so many things the meaning of which, when discovered, is so inconsistent with reason and common sense as to render it almost uncharitable to suppose that they could have been uttered by a sane man, that to secure myself against the suspicion of misrepresenting him in saying that "he denies that anything is governed by law," I will give his own words, that the reader may judge for himself. It will be seen that it is not an unconsidered assertion. He says: "To make myself clear, water runs down hill. The theist says that this happens because there is behind the phenomenon an active law. As a matter of fact, the law is this side of the phenomenon. Law does not cause the phenomenon, but the phenomenon causes the idea of law in our minds, and the idea is produced from the fact that under like circumstances the same phenomenon always happens."

Now, when a man of common sense is convinced of "the fact that under like circumstances the same phenomenon always happens," the only idea that is, or can be produced on his mind is, that it is the result of fixed invariable irresistible law, and that he can always calculate with absolute certainty upon the same result un-

der like circumstances. But Col. Ingersoll has no just ground upon which to base such a calculation, for his fundamental doctrines as opposed to a God of Creation are, that "there is no power superior to nature," and that "nature without passion, and without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever," and though he may have seen this result "happen" hundreds of times, he can have no assurance that it will "happen" again, for as there is no law against it, and no power able to prevent it, his goddess nature may, the very next time, come along, and by her transforming power, produce an entirely different phenomenon. For example. All his life he has seen what are called peach-trees produce peaches.

When those who believe that God has made it a fixed and invariable law of the peach-tree that it shall, under favorable circumstances, produce peaches, see the tree in full bloom in the spring-time, they calculate with certainty that if the favorable circumstances should continue, they will in due time gather peaches. But Col. Ingersoll can make no certain calculation of that sort, because just as his peaches are about to begin to ripen, since there is no law against it, and no power able to prevent it, his goddess nature may come along, and "without intention transform" his peaches into Irish potatoes, or even into live bull-frogs. Indeed, though he has seen thousands of people grow up, and live, and die in human form, he has no assurance that he will retain that form to-morrow, for as his goddess nature has, "without intention, formed, and transformed, and retransformed" him from "the skulless vertebrates of the dim Lauren-

tian seas," through all the animal world, through all that crawls and swims, and floats, and climbs, and walks "up to his present form, she may, as there is no law against it, and no superior power to prevent it," without intention, "transform" him back through some of these various grades and stages into a form altogether different from his present one. As there is no limit to, nor intention in, her forming transforming power, she might give him the body of a hog, the neck of a bull, the head of a hyena, the horn of a rhinoceros, and the tail of a monkey, and the legs of a kangaroo. She might cover one part of his body with quills of the porcupine, another with the wool of the sheep, and another with the feathers of the goose, and last of all, clap on his head the ears of the ass. It requires no stretch of the imagination to conceive that the power that can work up a "Skulless vertebrate in the dim Laurentian Seas" into a Shakespeare, could, without trouble, produce such an animal out of an Ingersoll even "without intention."

Col. Ingersoll says: "Mr. Black probably thinks that the difference in the weight of rocks and clouds was created by law; that parallel lines fail to unite, because it is illegal; that diameter and circumference could have been so made that it would be a greater distance across than around a circle; that a straight line could inclose a triangle, if not prevented by law; and that a little legislation could make it possible for two bodies to occupy the same space at the same time."

Certainly, Mr. Black believes that the difference between the weight of rocks and clouds was created by law, as does everybody else, who has as much sense as anybody

not more than half idiot ought to have been born with.

What we call weight, or, in other words, specific gravity, simply indicates the relative quantity of matter in its different forms occupying the same amount of space. For aught that we know all matter is of precisely the same absolute weight. We know that in a perfect vacuum a feather falls with the same velocity as a lump of gold, and that if by possibility a pound of feathers could be compressed into a space as small as that occupied by a pound of gold, they would be of the same weight or specific gravity. This probably can be done by nothing short of omnipotence, as it would be too dangerous a power to entrust to man.

So far as we know, or shall probably ever be able to find out, the difference in the apparent weight of matter in its different forms is due entirely to the resistance of the atmosphere as opposed to what is called the attraction of gravitation.

The attraction of gravitation acts upon quantity of absolute matter only, without reference to volume, while the resistance of the atmosphere is in proportion to the volume, without reference to the quantity of matter. A cubic inch of gold weighs nine times as much as a cubic inch of gypsum. Being of equal volume the resistance of the atmosphere to each is equal, but the attraction of gravitation is nine times greater upon the gold. In a pound of gypsum there is as much absolute matter as in a pound of gold, and the attraction of gravitation is equal upon both, but there is nine times the volume in the gypsum, and the resistance of the at-

mosphere to the pound of gypsum is nine times that to the gold.

Be these things as they may, God in his power, wisdom, and goodness, has made it the law of the being of all matter in all its forms, that every form shall, volume for volume, differ in weight from every other form ; and he has reflected to little purpose upon His works, who does not see and adore the wisdom which conceived, the benevolence which prompted, and the power which executed the law. Of this I shall say more when I come to speak of the moral character of God.

As to Col. Ingersoll's silly attempt to fix upon his opponent the responsibility for his own absurdities and self-contradictions, it is only necessary to say there is an extreme of absurdity at which the senses of men revolt, not only without aid from the intellect, but in defiance of all that any power of intellect can do to force it upon the understanding. This extreme Col. Ingersoll has reached in his senseless twaddle about parallel lines meeting, the diameter and circumference of a circle, a straight line inclosing a triangle, and two bodies occupying the same space at the same time. His assumptions of what he professes to suppose that Mr. Black probably thinks may be possibilities, destroy the identity of the things he enumerates ; in other words, divest them of the qualities which constitute their existence. Lines are parallel because they cannot unite. A line between two points ceases to be a curved line if its length is not greater than a straight line connecting the same parts ; a triangle is a triangle because it is inclosed by three lines ; two bodies are two because they cannot occupy the same space at the same time.

Colonel Ingersoll, or his goddess, nature, may make two lines meet, and he may swear they are parallel, make a curved line between two points and swear it is shorter than a straight line between the same points, draw a straight line and swear that it incloses a triangle, place two bodies side by side and swear that they occupy the same space at the same time, and a man of the commonest understanding would, upon bare supposition, unhesitatingly set him down as a hopeless idiot, without even giving him the benefit of the usual alternative of "knave or fool;" for he could not conceive it possible that a man with the least spark of sound intellect could so stultify himself as to seriously assert as truths absurdities too palpable and monstrous to deceive the grossest ignorance, or to impose upon the most trusting credulity, and too oppressively stupid to win for him even the poor merit of lying "just for the fun of the thing." Yet Col. Ingersoll's lectures teem with just such absurdities.

As the hallucination of a confirmed lunatic such absurdity might provoke to smiles of mirth, or move to tears of pity, according to the temper of the hearers; as the harmless extravagances of an admitted "crank" they could excite nothing but ridicule.

But here is a man, according to the verdict of friend and foe, eminently endowed with some of the elements which constitute pure intellect, possessed of many of the accompaniments and graces which ornament and add immensely to the availability and power of really great intellects, and make mediocrity interesting, and even dullness tolerable; a man whose tender sympathies are so thorough as to make his heart bleed when he contem-

plates the sufferings of the millions now dead, of those who lived when the world appeared to be insane, and to cause him to feel that "It is enough to make one almost insane with pity to think what man in the long night has suffered;" a man whose devotion to truth and justice is so strong, and whose heart is so mightily stirred with indignation against the arrogance and presumption, the tyranny, cruelty, injustice, oppression, and intolerance, and the fraud, falsehood, hypocrisy, cupidity, and craft of one class of the people of the present time, and so moved by compassion and sympathy for the sufferings of the other class, from the gross darkness, ignorance, and superstition in which they are sunk, and the abject mental and moral slavery and degradation in which they are held in this enlightened age and free country, that he has buckled on his armor, and in the true spirit of knight errantry, despising all dangers and defying all opposition, has gone forth, with the determined purpose to batter down the strongholds of the oppressors, to strike the fetters from the limbs of the mental and moral slaves, to dispel the clouds of darkness, ignorance, and superstition, and bathe the minds of men in the effulgent light of pure and unadulterated truth, professing that "he wants to do all the good he can, and to render all the service possible in the holy cause of truth," and asserting that "he is doing what little he can to hasten the day when society shall cease producing millionaires and mendicants—engorged indolence and famished industry—truth in rags and superstition robed and crowned."

These are grand objects and purposes, in the accomplishment of which every good man must wish him God-speed.

But when he is found prostituting his really great powers to the support of some of the greatest evils that have ever afflicted humanity, and, in the discussion of a subject of paramount importance to every human being, he is found seriously attempting to force upon the minds of sensible men the most glaring absurdities as sound arguments in aid of the development of truth, the only feelings that could be produced upon the minds of right-thinking men would be those of indignation and contempt, but for the sad conviction that must be forced upon them that he is simply a splendid ruin.

CHAPTER XXV.

DEFEATED at every point, as a last desperate resort to escape from a God of omnipotence, he flies into the arms of a blind, unintelligent, aimless fatalism, which, depriving man of all freedom of thought, speech, feeling, and action, makes him the helpless tool of a despotism which he cannot resist, and of necessity divests all action of all moral character. Judged by any received or any conceivable standard of morals, nothing that we can do, say, or think is either right or wrong, or justly entitled to praise or liable to censure, much less worthy of reward or punishment. In fact, there can be no standard of right and wrong.

He says—whether truly or not I do not know: “The theologians admit that the phenomena of matter tend at least to disprove the existence of any power superior to nature, because in such phenomena we see nothing but an endless chain of efficient causes—nothing but the force of a mechanical necessity. They, therefore, appeal to what they denominate the phenomena of mind to establish this superior power.

“The trouble is, that in the phenomena of mind we find the same endless chain of efficient causes, the same mechanical necessity. Every motive, every desire, every fear, hope, and dream must have been necessarily produced. There is no room in the mind of man for provi-

dence or chance." "They found that disease, death, life, thought, heat, cold, the seasons, the mind, the decency of man, the instinct of animals—in short, that all physical and mental phenomena are governed by law, absolute, eternal, and inexorable."

"Necessity," as he uses the term, is irresistible, in fact, it is omnipotence. Where is the room here for freedom of thought, speech, or action? for virtue or vice, for good or evil, for praise or censure, for reward or punishment? The gentle zephyr that plays with the curls and kisses the cheek of maidenhood, the rush of the tornado that carries death and desolation in the sweep of its course, the lightning's flash, the ocean's roar, the slaughter of thousands of men, women, and children, and the killing of a snake, or a tiger, all action, animate and inanimate, stands upon the same moral plane; that is, they are neither good nor bad. Even those who inflicted the tortures which Col. Ingersoll so graphically describes, and all of which, in his imagination, he so acutely suffered, and whom he so fiercely denounces, were no more the proper subjects of praise or censure than the senseless, insensible instruments—the thumb-screw, the collar of torture, the scavenger's daughter, and the rack—which they used. All were alike the passive, helpless instruments of an unreasoning, unintelligent, unfeeling, merciless, remorseless, omnipotent despotism, controlling alike all thought, feeling, and action of all existing things, animate and inanimate; a despotism which they had no agency in creating, and have no power either to resist or to escape; a tyranny infinitely greater than that which Col. Ingersoll charges upon

the Christian's God, and a slavery infinitely more helpless, hopeless, and abject than that which He is charged with imposing upon his subjects ; because the Christian faith admits that man may, if he chooses, disregard the commandments of God. While, according to Col. Ingersoll's faith, he has no power even to think of disregarding the decrees of his God.

If his assertions as to the absolute irresistible control exerted by this "mechanical necessity" over the thoughts, feelings, sentiments, words, and actions of man are true, then all of Col. Ingersoll's professions of a desire to benefit his race, all of his boasts of free thought and free speech, all of his professed horror of wrong, oppression, cruelty, and crime, all his professions of love for liberty, truth, justice, and right, instead of the inspirations of a great intellect, and a brave and generous spirit, are as worthless as the incoherent ravings of a maniac, the work of an insensible and purposeless, but irresistible power, through a helpless and passive slave as its tool, without any will or even volition of his own, and no more worthy of censure or of punishment, or entitled to praise or reward than the axe with which the woodman fells a tree, or the stone, with which he crushes the head of a serpent.

As Col. Ingersoll has never "seen" in the outside world, nor "felt" within him anything pointing to, or requiring, a higher state of existence, and as he claims to possess, cultivate, and practice all the virtues necessary to happiness, it follows that he must be as high in the scale of existence, and as wise, as good, and as happy as he wants to be, except that sometimes his pure and

tender heart "bleeds when he contemplates the sufferings of millions now dead, of those who lived when the world appeared to be insane, when the heavens were filled with an infinite HORROR, who snatched babes with dimpled hands and rosy cheeks from the white breasts of mothers, and dashed them into an abyss of eternal flames."

This is a harrowing picture, and very like the case of the kitchen-maid, who, after standing and gazing for some time into a very hot fire, suddenly burst into a flood of tears with a loud and agonizing cry, and being asked what was the matter, as soon as she could get sufficient control of herself, sobbed out: "Oh, I was looking into that great hot fire, and all at once it came into my mind, suppose that one of these days I should get married and have a dear, sweet, little boy, the dearest, sweetest, prettiest little fellow in the world, and that when he got to be about two years old, just so as to toddle about the house, some day, when I was busy and not looking at him, he should fall into that great hot fire and get burnt to death. Oh, oh! my dear, sweet, beautiful little baby, it would kill me."

Poor Col. Ingersoll's heart bleeds over the imaginations of the past, the poor girl's over the imaginations of the future.

The wonder is that Col. Ingersoll's heart, instead of bleeding, did not leap with joy and his sides shake with laughter at the idea of how the infinite HORROR was disappointed and fooled; for, whatever the infinite HORROR might think, Col. Ingersoll knew that there was no "abyss of eternal flame" into which to cast the baby,

and besides, even if there should be such an abyss, recognizing no such thing as a soul, he knew that after the babe was dead there was nothing to burn but a little piece of insensible matter that couldn't be hurt, and that after all it could be nothing more than anticipating the practice of cremation which seems to be growing into favor ; for he does not charge that the babes were cast into the fire alive.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN what I have written it was no part of my purpose to offer any proofs of the existence of a God of Creation. If I have occasionally asserted it, it was only when Col. Ingersoll's absurdities made the conclusion irresistible. I think I have shown that he has not produced a particle of evidence, or advanced an argument of even a show of plausibility against it. In fact it must be evident to any mind that examines the subject impartially in the light of reason and common sense, that it is impossible for him to do either ; for, as in one of his lucid intervals, he truly says : " In the absence of positive evidence, analogy, and experience, argument is simply impossible, and at the very best can amount only to the useless agitation of the air." This, of course, reduces him to simple, bare, assertion, for it is impossible that either of these things can be brought to his support. " Positive evidence " he does not pretend to claim ; " analogy " cannot exist, because there is no other universe proven to have existed from eternity to furnish it ; and, for the same reason, he is without " experience " for his support. They are all clearly and decidedly opposed to him.

He has said in one of his lucid intervals, as we have several times quoted : " The mind of every thoughtful man is forced to one of these two conclusions : either that

the universe is self-existing, or that it was created by a self-existent being."

As abstract propositions, it is as easy to conceive of one as the other ; and, though the human intellect cannot take in the idea of anything without a beginning, we are compelled to accept the one or the other, on Col. Ingersoll's "unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance, called faith," and, considered in connection with all that we know and see, reason and common sense compel us to reject the first.

About the unknown we can reason only from what we know ; and, to reach with certainty the unknown cause of a known effect, it is absolutely necessary that we prove, first : That the assumed cause is adequate to the production of all the effect ; second, that no other cause is capable of it. The first we must prove, because otherwise we may arbitrarily assume as a cause something entirely inadequate to the production of the effect, simply because we have not happened to find any other that could produce it, as in my opinion is the case in ascribing the tides to the moon. The second we must prove, because if there is any other cause which can produce the effect, there is no certainty as to the real cause. Let us see how far Col. Ingersoll is sustained by this proof :

We see all the great worlds around us, which, so far as we know them, are composed of inert, unintelligent matter, moving with perfect regularity in their orbits. So far as we know anything of such matter, we know it has no properties by which it could devise and put into operation a system bearing on the face of it incontestable evidence of such marvelous wisdom and stupendous power.

Here is at least negative evidence from analogy against him.

Then we know that long since our earth came into existence there was neither animal nor vegetable life upon it, nor any possibility for the existence of either. Here is positive evidence against at least a part of his hypothesis.

Our observations and experience prove to us that inert, unintelligent matter has no property which enables it to produce either animal or vegetable life. Here is at least negative evidence of experience against him—positive evidence, unless such property can be proven to exist.

Even assuming that matter existed from eternity, it is utterly impossible to prove that it could produce all these effects, and equally impossible to prove that there is no other cause by which they could have been produced. I have admitted that some of the evidence is negative, as it may be possible that Col. Ingersoll's goddess nature may possess some secret powers, the existence of which she has not revealed to us common mortals, but, as he admits that she cannot create, and as after a trial of six thousand years, and we know not how much longer, she has failed to furnish any evidence that by her forming, transforming, and retransforming powers she has made one plant, or one animal out of another, it is perhaps safe to conclude, that she never did and never will.

Before leaving this part of the subject, there are a few things to which I will call his attention, and ask him, to explain.

He talks much about the rights of men, women and

children. Will he tell us how and whence we derived any rights, and what they are? He cannot say that God has given us any, because there is no God. The only source, then, is "nature." But, "nature works without passion and without intention," and "produces man without purpose and obliterates him without regret." Then she had no intention, or purpose, to give us any rights; and, if by accident she had happened to give us any, we have no means of knowing what they are, and by the very next turn of her "transforming and retransforming" power she might "obliterate them without regret," so that we can't know whether we have any or not. Besides, having neither intention nor purpose in anything she does, she might accidentally give to one man one set of rights, and to another a set altogether different and opposed to the first; or, as we are all mere animals sprung from the "skulless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas," perhaps at the beginning she gave equally to all of the "inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." If any of us have any rights more than the "skulless vertebrates," they must have been created; and he says, she "cannot create."

But, allowing that she could manage somehow to get them into existence, will he explain in what stage of animal existence rights began? For example, it is said that in Africa, where, I suppose, monkeys are evolved into negroes, young monkeys are a favorite and very delicate dish; now will he inform us about how long after the monkey has evolved into the negro before the negro acquires the right to kill and eat his younger brother monkey, which might, if left alone, evolve into another

negro? Will he tell us why he has not as much right to eat a man as a beef, or a baby as a pig? As "nature, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever," the beef and the pig might in the course of time evolve into Shakespeares, or even into an Ingersoll; what right has he to cut them off from that high destiny? I suppose he must entirely abstain from animal food, unless he has some of the cannibal in him, for he can never put a bit of animal food into his mouth without feeling that he is eating some of his kin.

He says: "If we have the right to use our reason, we certainly have the right to act in accordance with it, and no God can have the right to punish us for such action." That may depend something of the kind of reason we use. Whose reason? His or mine, or that of somebody else? Every man claims to act in accordance with his reason. When two reasons conflict, one must be wrong. As Col. Ingersoll's goddess nature has "formed, transformed, and retransformed" so many different sorts of reason, it is well that we shall make an effort to see which is best; but how shall we know? for as "without passion or intention" she keeps up the operation "forever," she may be now destroying every kind of reason that now exists, and making an entirely new set. Paine's reason taught him that there is a God. Voltaire, whom Col. Ingersoll calls "that great man, who for half a century was the intellectual emperor of Europe, and who, from his throne at the foot of the Alps, pointed the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Christendom," was taught by reason that there is a God who created the universe. Will Col. Ingersoll assert, that these two of his greatest men

did not understand what reason is? In every age of the world the reason of the wisest and best men have taught them that there is a God. Col. Ingersoll's reason teaches him there is no God. Whose reason is most reliable? Col. Ingersoll's reason teaches him that the Christian religion is the greatest curse that has been inflicted upon the human race, and that it is his duty to destroy it. For upwards of eighteen centuries the reason of the wisest and best men has taught them that it is the only safe guide of man in all the business and relations of life. Whose reason is most to be trusted? or who can tell what reason is?

However short even honest and sincere individuals or communities may come of living and acting in accordance with its teachings; and however much reproach has been, or may yet be, cast upon it by the hypocrites and thieves who have prostituted to the gratification of their pride, ambition, and cupidity the influence and power they have acquired by a profession of devotion to its principles, the whole civilized world knows exactly what Christianity is. Outside of it, nobody knows what reason is, because outside of it reason does not exist. Christianity, in its purity, is the perfection of reason, the pure law of nature which God has communicated to man to purify, to elevate, and to bring him nigh to himself.

Of this I shall have more to say, when I come to treat of Christianity separately.

CHAPTER XXVII.

COL. INGERSOLL'S hypothesis and theories are perhaps the best substitutes that have been or can be offered for a God of creation; but as they are utterly without evidence to support them, and opposed to reason and common sense, they must be discarded as worthless, at least until he succeeds, by his great discovery of the elements of Doctor Ramrod's tincture of Gridiron, in proving that nature can supply him with wings and raise the dead. "Nous Verrons," as old Tom Ritchie used to say.

In what I have written I have said, perhaps, a good many foolish things; but though Solomon has advised: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him," I have thought this is a case suited to the other part of his advice: "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit."

I see, from one of Col. Ingersoll's books, that he complains very bitterly of the abuse that has been visited upon him by the clergy and the religious press. This, besides being something like an admission that he has been worsted in the conflicts of his own seeking, seems to be in derogation of the laws of Knighterrantry, as expounded by his great prototype, the famous Knight of La Mancha, who appears to have mastered all its laws, and fathomed all its principles from top to bottom, for as this redoubtable Knight was retiring from his famous

and rather disastrous conflict with the wind-mills, his faithful Squire, Sancho, said to him: "Pray, sir, sit a little more upright, for you lean strangely on one side, which must proceed from the bruises you received in your fall." To which the Knight replied, "Thou art in the right, and if I do not complain, it is because Knights-errant are not permitted to complain of any wound they receive, even though their bowels should come out of their bodies."

Now, as Col. Ingersoll set out in search of adventures with as determined a purpose to succor the distressed, and to relieve the oppressed, as that by which the great Knight of La Mancha was inspired (with this difference, however, that Col. Ingersoll appears to have been richly compensated for his benevolent labors, while his predecessor encountered dangers and perils and afforded aid and succor at his own proper charges), and appears to have made his attacks with as little discretion, it would seem to be but fair to conclude that those whom he attacked were acting "in accordance with their reason," in defending themselves to the best of their ability; and, if they have fought and worsted him with weapons of his own choosing, it seems a little unmanly that he should complain of the bruises he has received.

It appears that both of these great Knights committed a grievous mistake as to the character of the enemies against which they so valiantly and confidently laid their lances in rest.

The Knight of La Mancha believed that he was attacking nothing but thirty or forty giants, which he could, in a moment, kill or put to flight. After his overthrow,

he accounted for his discomfiture by charging that his enemy, the "Sage Preston, had converted these giants into wind-mills to rob him of the honor of their overthrow.

Col. Ingersoll appears to have entertained the opinion that he was attacking ghosts, phantoms, and spirits, which would, at the first sound of his voice, as they are said to do at the crowing of the cock,

"Vanish like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons."

Instead of that, he has found himself confronted by stalwart beings of flesh and blood, and thews and sinews, and of passions, too, by whom he was speedily taught that in his battles "blows were to be given, as well as received."

I do not know what the clergy or the religious press have said of him; for although the publisher of his lectures, I suppose by his direction, says: "Hundreds of pamphlets have been published, thousands of sermons have been preached, and numberless articles have been written against them, with the effect of increasing their popularity every day;" the only thing I have ever seen on the subject, either from the clergy, or the religious press, was Talmage's sermon two or three weeks ago. In fact, it is but little over two years that I recollect ever to have heard his name. Within the past few months I have seen him spoken of by the secular press as the "great blasphemer."

I suppose he must have been much belabored by the clergy and the religious press, and even by the secular

press, in which it is my opinion that, impelled by a zeal not according to knowledge, they have failed to exercise a wise discretion or a high degree of Christian charity.

Col. Ingersoll's great prototype suffered from many severe punishments, because those whom he assailed failed to perceive that his excess of benevolence had converted him into a raving maniac.

Col. Ingersoll has, as I judge, suffered much from the same cause, as the first effect of a personal assault, even upon a man of sound mind, is to excite the angry passions, and not content with defending himself from injury until he can learn the cause of the assault, he goes about to inflict as much injury upon the assailant as possible. This is not in accordance with the teachings of Christianity, though it may be "in accordance with reason," according to Col. Ingersoll's ideas of reason.

Now, if those whom he has assailed had not permitted "their angry passions to rise," a very little reflection would have disclosed to them his insanity, of which the evidences are so conspicuous and so abundant, and their anger would have changed into pity and compassion, and induced a very different sort of treatment.

What sense or charity, for example, or humanity can there be in charging the horrible crime of blasphemy to a poor unfortunate fellow-creature whose intellect is so unhinged and disjointed, that all the grandeur and glory, and beauties, and bounties of creation, instead of pointing to a God, the creator, governor, and preserver of all, serve only to run him off into a wild hunt for some impossible mode by which they created themselves.

I have carefully abstained from charging to any wick-

edness of intention, those things which, if done or said by a man of sound mind, would indicate a bad heart, because the evidences of insanity are too strong, and too clearly manifested to be either overlooked or mistaken by any cool-headed, reflecting man, and because he is reported to be, in his lucid intervals, a good, kind-hearted fellow, and because, in those intervals, he frequently gives expression in beautiful and eloquent terms to some of the best feelings and sentiments of humanity.

True, in exposing his absurdities and extravagancies, I have treated some of them as the emanations from a mind otherwise sound, because the intervals often change so suddenly and abruptly from the one to the other, and, by that acuteness and cunning often accompanying insanity, the sane and insane are so adroitly mixed up together, that the hearer, unapprised of the mental condition of the speaker, might, without critical examination, accept both as sound, against which I desire to put all upon their guard, that they may separate the good from that which is, to say, the least worthless.

Of course, Col. Ingersoll is unconscious of these things ; his intellect looks at things like a man viewing a landscape through a wrinkled pane of glass, to whose view all things are presented distorted, and in a confused, incongruous, jumbled mass ; or more properly, perhaps, his intellect may be considered a sort of kaleidoscope, a pretty toy, consisting of a tube with two or more mirrors in it ; at one end is a small compartment in which are placed pieces of glass of various colors, crooked pins, pieces of brass and steel, anything that glistens, but of no value. As often as the tube is turned these fragments change

places without order or system, and present a new mixture of the beautiful and the deformed. So Col. Ingersoll's mind appears to have gathered up a multitude of fragments of but little or no value that I can perceive, and having unlimited command of language, an inexhaustible supply of topics and figures, a clear utterance and elegant action, he can present these fragments in new—and sometimes beautiful—forms without end; so that when he begins to talk or speak, there is no reason why he should ever stop, but from mere physical exhaustion.

“The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools that stand in better place,
Garnished like him, that for a tricky word
Defy the matter.”

“This man-lady hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions.” [Perhaps the various beasts through which he has passed from “the skulless vertebrate in the dim Laurentian seas” to his present condition]. “A man into whom nature hath so crowded humors, that his valor is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion; there is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of it; nor any man an attaint, but he carries some stain of it. He hath the joints of everything; but everything so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THERE is, perhaps, a not very small number of people in the world, who, believing fully in the existence of a God who created all things, yet, because they cannot understand his whole purposes in regard to man and the manner of working them out, entertain doubts as to his taking any interest or exercising any control over our affairs. There is another class, and probably large in numbers, who, from the same causes, are often tempted to impeach his justice, goodness, and mercy, because in the affairs of the world many things occur which, in their judgment, are inconsistent with the existence of those qualities in a being having full power to prevent them. These things I shall discuss when I come to speak of his moral character.

But whatever doubts men may have, and whatever difficulties they may have on these subjects, there has never been a man of sound, well-balanced intellect open to the reception of the truth, who has doubted the existence of a God of Creation ; for instead of having to search for evidences in support of it, they unsought press themselves upon us from all points with irresistible force ; and in the attempt to array and enumerate them, the mind is bewildered and overwhelmed by their number, variety, and power. To present even a few of them to a sound and healthy mind for the purpose of conviction, is therefore

simply a work of supererogation ; to attempt to array and present them all would be to engage in a never-ending labor.

I propose, therefore, to present here only a few of the most prominent and familiar, not so much with the view of convincing anybody, as to bring to the mind a few more of Col. Ingersoll's absurdities, more conspicuously and in stronger relief by contrast.

As I have several times mentioned, Col. Ingersoll, in one of his lucid intervals has said : "The mind of every thoughtful man is forced to one of these two conclusions: either that the universe is self-existent, or that it was created by a self-existent being." This was an unfortunate and even a fatal admission, for self-evident though it be, he has, by unthoughtfully admitting it, thrown away his armor and his weapons, and left himself open to and defenseless against the assaults of right, reason, and science, which are daily adding to the evidences against him.

The simple admission of the possibility that the universe may have been created by a self-existent being settles the question against him. Creation means infinite power and infinite intelligence. It is as easy, to say the least of it, for the human mind to grasp the idea of a self-existent being of infinite power and wisdom who created all things, as the idea of the self-existence of the universe ; and a sound, intelligent mind, in view of the wonderful power and wisdom manifested in the order, arrangement, and system everywhere displayed through all the works of creation, will find it much easier to accept them as the work of infinite power and intelligence, than as the chance productions of blind, lifeless, unintelligent matter.

And while, even as to the material world, we neither do nor can know anything beyond the facts that we see, there is in the hypothesis that all things were created by a self-existent being nothing inconsistent with or opposed to anything that we see or know ; while Col. Ingersoll's hypothesis at every step comes in direct conflict with all that we do or ever have seen or known ; for example, that the whole human race came, through the monkey and the negro, from " the skullless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas." I wonder how the beautiful women who are reported to flock in great numbers to hear Col. Ingersoll prove it like the idea. Are they, like him, proud of their ancestry ?

I am proposing to present now a few of the evidences of the existence of a God of Creation, without reference to any of his attributes except infinite power, and infinite intelligence ; I shall, for the present, discard the Bible, even at the risk of subjecting myself to the suspicion of putting Col. Ingersoll upon the rack.

I adopt this course, as I have stated upon another occasion, because those who believe in the Bible account require no further evidence of the existence of a God, and because, with those who do not believe in a God, the Bible will be no authority. What a God-send the Bible has been to Col. Ingersoll ! It is difficult to perceive how he could have managed to get along without it. It has furnished a large portion of the staples of his lectures ; it has supplied him with material for the exercise and display of his powers of travesty, ridicule, burlesque caricature, denunciation, and invective, upon which he has industriously and perseveringly rung the changes, upon almost all occasions

and upon almost every subject upon which he has lectured. He has found in it, as he supposes, everything that is absurd, grotesque, false, hypocritical, cruel, tyrannical, merciless, unjust, low, mean, base, and infamous, upon which to descant to the crowd. Of this I shall have something to say when I come to speak of the Bible ; for the present, I shall direct my attention to some of the evidences outside of it.

First, we see this grand universe spread out before us in all its glory, by its vastness impressing at once upon every rational mind the conviction that it is the work of infinite power. We see all these great worlds revolving in their regular orbits and in their regular times, without delay, change, or variation, impressing us with the conviction that all these things are the result of plan and design by an infinite intelligence as well as infinite power. These convictions are forced upon every rational mind which will give to these subjects a moment's serious contemplation.

Col. Ingersoll says : "I know as little as any one else about the 'plan' of the universe, and as to the 'design,' I know just as little." That, I have no doubt, is true, but the world has probably yet to learn that his ignorance of any truth is evidence that it does not exist. He continues : "It will not do to say that the universe was designed, and therefore there must be a designer ; there must first be proof that it was designed."

This is a mere trifling with words, simply a pitiful, stupid evasion ; the man that cannot see them is an idiot ; he that, being one remove from idiocy, will not see them, is prepared to discard all the evidence of his senses and deny his own existence.

There are many things self-evident; that is, so plain that neither argument nor evidence can make them any clearer.

Col. Ingersoll, upon examination of a watch, would scarcely be willing to stultify himself by saying, "there is no evidence that it had a designer, until other proof is furnished that it was designed."

If he were to find a house elegantly furnished with everything that could promote comfort and gratify the taste, and upon remarking that these things must have been planned and designed by some person of excellent judgment and exquisite taste, some one should reply: "I know as little as any one else about the plan, and as to the design, I know just as little. It will not do to say, all this was designed, and therefore there must be a designer; there must first be proof that it was designed," he would, unless restrained by a sense of politeness, or a decent regard for the opinions, or a delicate forbearance with the ignorance, of others, of the possession of which there is very little evidence in his lectures, reply: "You are a fool; it admits of neither argument nor proof; the inspection alone makes the design as clear as the existence of the house and furniture themselves." So the simple inspection of the universe affords to a reasonable and honest mind as perfect and conclusive evidence of plan and design as of the existence of the universe itself, and both furnish incontestable proof that it is the work of infinite power and infinite intelligence. Col. Ingersoll continues with a parcel of nonsense about getting behind to another "designer," to which it is only necessary to say, that when we have reached infinity there is nothing beyond.

In refusing to accept, upon honest conviction, a self-existent being of infinite power and intelligence as creator and governor of the universe, the only alternative left Col. Ingersoll is, by "that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance called faith," or by that obstinate stupidity which is blind to evidence and deaf to reason, to ascribe all the wonders of the universe to that blind, unintelligent thing which he calls nature, and which he says works "without intention" and "without purpose."

Col. Ingersoll, in one of his lucid intervals, says: "Besides, you must remember that every wrong, in some way, tends to abolish itself." This may possibly prove prophetic. His ferocious attacks upon God, the Bible, and Christianity, will doubtless influence multitudes, who, in the absorbing pursuits of life, have thought but little on these subjects, to investigate his charges; and it may awaken the church to the consciousness of the great distance to which in the eager pursuit of the things of the world and the indulgence of "the lust of the eye and the pride of life" it has strayed from the pure, self-denying principles and practices of Christianity as taught by its great founder, by which it has given "occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully;" for it cannot be denied that, as Dr. Talmage said recently, "the inconsistency of the church supplies to infidelity its strongest weapons against Christianity." I am not sure that I have given the exact words, as I quote from memory.

Col. Ingersoll proceeds: "It is hard to make a lie stand always. A lie will not fit a fact. It will only fit another lie made for the purpose. The life of a lie is only a question of time. Nothing but truth is immortal."

In his insane anxiety to destroy God, the Bible, and Christianity, he adopts the lie that "the universe is self-existent from eternity." But he is met by the fact that a long way this side of eternity there neither did nor could exist upon the earth either animal or vegetable life. The lie does not fit the fact. To get around the difficulty, he adopts the other lie, that what he calls nature has produced all the vegetable and animal life. He denies her the power to create, for to allow her that power would conflict with the first lie, that there has been nothing created. But without informing us what she is, whence she came, whether she too existed from eternity or was created since, how, or whence she derived her power, he asserts that by forming, transforming, and re-transforming forever (which I suppose means from eternity), she has, from inert, insensible, unintelligent matter, and matter which had been melted and steamed for unknown periods of time, formed vegetable and animal life, sensation, consciousness, and intellect. This lie has for its support nothing but bare assertion, and is met by the fact, which it does not fit, that there is not a particle of evidence that there is in existence a vegetable or an animal which was not in existence when the work of creation was closed by the production of man; and we have positive evidence that all plants and animals now existing retain the same distinguishing characteristics that marked them as far back as history or tradition can trace them; and of plants and animals now existing we find remains dating far beyond the reach of history or tradition, which prove that they were essentially the same as now.

Besides inducing men to examine into the truth of his

charges and the force of what he calls his arguments, his attacks upon God, the Bible, and Christianity will perhaps lead them to investigate the testimony against him.

We are so much in the habit of seeing from day to day and year to year the grandeur and beauties of creation and of enjoying the benefits derived from them, that we come to look upon them as matters of course, in which we have no especial interest.

How few are there who, in seeing at night all the great worlds in view, think of asking themselves how came they there and how is it that they are kept in their places? By whomsoever that question may be seriously asked, to him will be returned the answer, "It is all the work of infinite power and infinite intelligence." If he should ask "Why are they there?" the answer will be, "You cannot know all the reasons, but this much you can know, that, in part at least, they are there for your benefit." We do not know how much they are necessary to our well-being, nor can we, unless we were deprived of them. If we could imagine the "darkness that could be felt" in which we should have to move at night if the stars and the moon were blotted out, we might form some faint, and only a faint, conception of the blessings we derive from them.

"For so it falls out,
That what we have, we prize not to the worth,
Whiles we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
Why then, we rack the value; then we find
The virtue, that possession would not show us,
Whiles it was ours."

CHAPTER XXIX.

BUT the mind of a thoughtful man need not go outside of himself for evidence that will force conviction upon him. As a mere animal, he finds himself surrounded on all sides by other animals vastly his superiors in all the means of attack, defense, escape from danger or injury, and the means of obtaining subsistence. In these things even the insects, in short, to use the language of Col. Ingersoll, "All that crawls and swims and floats and climbs and walks," are his superiors in all things necessary to life. He finds that of all the animal creation there are but few which come into life so helpless and so utterly incapable of taking care of and of providing for themselves as man, and that those few acquire this power while man is still in his helpless infancy. He has not, like all other animals that draw their first support from the mother, even the instinct which teaches them where and how to procure it. As a mere animal his condition is but little better at maturity. Take a perfect physical man without intellect to-day, and he is utterly unable to provide himself the means of living. Wipe out from the face of the earth all that has been done since man came upon it, and give to this perfect physical man perfect intellect, divested of all that we have learned from observation and experience, and he would be the same helpless, defenseless creature, incapable of sustaining life.

If Col. Ingersoll, in all the maturity of manhood, with all his learning, reason, science, and eloquence, were to-day put naked in the ring with one of the recent descendants of his far-off ancestry, a three-year-old monkey, he would come out rather the worse for wear, unless the instinct of kinship should mollify the rage of the monkey. If he should engage with a wild boar, it is likely that, without some providential interference in his behalf, we should have no more of his lectures. If he should happen to find himself in a pen with a mad bull I imagine the result would be like that which occurred with a man I once knew :

Having on his farm an unruly and vicious steer, which he had determined to convert into beef, he had him driven into a lot inclosed by a high and strong fence, and, having no gun at hand, directed three of his men to knock him on the head with an axe. After manœuvring in vain for some time to get near enough to the steer to inflict the fatal blow, he became enraged, assumed the aggressive, and went for the men, whereupon they put the fence between him and themselves with all possible speed, and reported the attempt to kill him in that way so full of danger that they could not renew it.

Like Israel Putnam, when his negro man refused to undertake a second interview with that terrible old she-wolf in her den, our hero declared he was ashamed to have such cowards on his place, and that he would kill the steer himself. Accordingly, pulling off his coat, and rolling up his sleeves, he proceeded to the lot, clambered over the fence and, with axe in hand, boldly marched for the steer.

But the steer, already enraged by previous persecutions, and perhaps emboldened by the ease with which he had put the others to flight, did not wait for the attack, but made a rush for the invader before he had passed over half the ground between them.

Doubtless, our hero felt that his great size (for his avoirdupois was over two hundred pounds), his lordly bearing and threatening attitude would at once intimidate the steer into submission ; and that his already well-established reputation for courage would be largely increased by the performance, single-handed, of a feat which three men had not dared to undertake. But the sudden and unmistakable demonstration that his appearance, so far from producing these effects, had made the steer more ready for the fray produced a revulsion of feeling, and he was seized with a panic like that to which, it is said, the bravest men, even in large numbers, are sometimes subject, and, dropping the axe, he ingloriously fled, and as he fled he cried out to his men, "Tell Lucy I died game!" Lucy was his wife.

Fortunately he had so much the start, and his flight was so rapid, that he escaped without injury, save a rent in his nether garment and few slight bruises, from the precipitancy with which, by a little aid from the steer, he reached the ground on the other side of the fence.

Just imagine Col. Ingersoll, naked and unarmed, fleeing across an open plain from a mad bull ; wouldn't he wish that just then nature would come along with some of Dr. Ramrod's Tincture of Gridiron, and raise him a good pair of wings, or at least that somebody was there to bear testimony to his wife, that "he died game?"

Now I am far from asserting that Col. Ingersoll would flee under such circumstances, though Redpath reports him as having made good time on one occasion, when Ned Forest was after him, though it was of no avail, as in consequence of a mistake of his horse in falling down, Forest caught him, and after keeping him a while discharged him on his parole, and he never went back. Redpath says : "Ingersoll said to me of his career, 'I was not fit to be a soldier; I never saw our men fire but I thought of the widows and orphans they would make, and wished they would miss.'" No doubt, Ingersoll is a good, kind-hearted fellow, but I should not be surprised if he was thinking as much of the widows and orphans that might be made by the other fellows, as by his own men.

But to return to the monkey and the rest of animal existencè.

Can Col. Ingersoll explain to us, upon the theory of his "honest thought," how it is that all these animals, from "the skulless vertebrates in the dim Laurentian seas," to the highest type of the brute creation, have all entered into life so greatly the superiors of man in every power necessary to the preservation of life, and that they have never learned anything beyond what was born with them, except a few things which a few of them have been taught by man? and how it is that from generation to generation they have not advanced a step from their original state; that they have no means of procuring subsistence beyond that which God, or, as Col. Ingersoll would say, "nature," has provided for them; that they have no past, no future, nothing but the present; that, their present hunger and thirst satisfied, they lie down

in quiet, or exercise their physical powers in play, taking no thought for anything, until the nature with which God has endowed them demands more food ; and that from day to day, and from the beginning to the close of life, this is their history.

Can Col. Ingersoll explain to us how, when, where, and by what means this monkey, well-clothed and eminently endowed with all the powers for attack, defense, escape from danger and injury, and the means of procuring his subsistence, was treated so inhumanly as to be reduced down to that naked, and, as a mere animal, the most helpless, defenseless, and dependent of all animals—man, and that man a negro, the most ignorant and helpless of all the human race. For, be it remembered that neither Col. Ingersoll nor any of his sect pretend to claim that nature ever makes men out of anything but monkeys, nor any men out of monkeys but negroes.

Can he explain how it is that this lowest type of man, starting life in this helpless and defenseless condition, and in the midst of the most powerful, physically, and by instinct the most cruel, ferocious, and destructive to animal life of all animal existences, should not only have survived, but, low as they are in the scale of human existence, should have reached a condition which enables them to master all the brute creation.

Of course, according to Col. Ingersoll's "honest thought," the negro is the origin of the human race, and from it all mankind are descended. He says, "man cannot conceive of anything utterly unlike what he has seen or felt." I suppose he has never seen a negro changed into a white man, but, as he conceives of such a

thing, it must be because he *feels* some of the negro in him. I have never seen him, but, judging from his pictures so widely scattered over the country, the only trace of the negro that I can see is in his thick lips.

As far back as history or tradition gives us any information, the negro was the same that he is now ; and since, according to Col. Ingersoll's "honest thought," all the people that nature has made were made out of monkeys and were negroes ; and as it has never been known that nature has changed negroes into white people, can Col. Ingersoll explain how white and other races came into existence ?

As he is a man of wonderful resources, perhaps he has found some white monkeys that came up from "the skulless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas" to make white people out of ; but if he has not, it don't matter, as his powers of assertion without proof are sufficient to supply them.

But admit that he may somehow manage, through nature's "forming, transforming, and retransforming" power, to get up some white people ; according to his theory they must come into existence the same helpless, defenseless, dependent beings, the easy prey of all other animals, and without even instinct to teach them how to begin to sustain life. Can he explain how it is that this, as a mere animal, the most helpless and inefficient of all, came not only to survive, but to acquire powers and faculties of which all other animals are utterly destitute ; and knowledge infinitely beyond their reach, by which he is enabled to subjugate to his use and control to his will the powers and capacities of all else, animate and inani-

mate? And how it is that, as far back as man has any history, he has commenced life in this helpless condition, and in his maturity has exercised this unlimited control.

The man who, in the face of the light of this age, is so insane as to entertain the "honest thought" and make the boast that he derives his existence from "the skulless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas" through the monkey and the negro, has not made progress enough in intellectual improvement to reflect much credit even upon his assumed ancestry. It is therefore not to be expected that Col. Ingersoll can explain these things upon his hypothesis, or that his intellect can even take them in, as requiring explanation; for, as a child shut up in a dark room, into which there is one ray of sunshine beaming through a crack, sees nothing but the particles of dust floating in the sunbeam, although the walls may be decked with the finest paintings and the floor spread with the richest gems; so the hallucination that "there is no God" has taken such entire possession of all of Col. Ingersoll's faculties that, although the evidences against him are scattered broadcast through the whole universe, he is unable to perceive anything but the wild absurdities which his distempered imagination tells him are all that "is."

But a man of honest mind, amenable to the dictates of sound reason and common sense, looking in upon himself, seeing what he was, what he is, and feeling what he may become, finds the explanation written in letters of light brighter than the beams of the midday sun—"Man was created with all the faculties and powers he now possesses, by a being of infinite power and wisdom, and preserved and taught by that being, until he learned to use them."

CHAPTER XXX.

THERE is one thing which it appears to me must be a matter of constant wonder to Col. Ingersoll. It is that, although nature has made man, and elephants, and whales, and all other animals, and the hills, and rocks, and trees, and mountains, and rivers, with such an abundant supply of materials at hand she has never made a house, or a wagon, nor even a wheelbarrow, or a broom. It is true, he says that "without intention, she forms, transforms, and retransforms forever;" of course all these things were made by accident, but it is strange that in all her random work for so many thousands of years she never even by accident made a house, a wagon, a gate, a pair of shoes, or something else of that sort. I do not say that she never did anything of that kind, but I have never heard that she did, and it may be for aught that I know that she did, about the time that she made man and all other animals; but if she did, it was so long ago that we have no more evidence of it than we have that Col. Ingersoll came up from the "skulless vertebrates of the dim Laurentian seas," and indeed not so much, for we have his word for that. What incalculable blessings, according to his standard, he may bestow upon us, if, when by the use of his grand discovery of the life-giving elements of Dr. Ramrod's Tincture of Gridiron he succeeds in training nature to making wings and raising the dead, he will set her to

work in building houses, making carriages, steam-engines, and all other things that we need, and are now compelled to procure by constant toil, thereby proving to us that we are indebted to nature not only for existence but everything else.

Until then, we may be content to ascribe all the grandeur and all the glories of the universe, and all the blessings we derive from them, to the work of a God of infinite power and wisdom, and to recognize in what we call nature, not the power, nor the source of power, by which all these things came into being, but the representation of the laws by which he governs all his works, and the reflection from them of his power, wisdom, and goodness, a reflection which serves to point us to the maker, preserver, and father of all.

Like Col. Ingersoll, I have given you my honest thought as to his effort to kill off a God of Creation. I have in process of preparation another volume, in which I propose to consider of him in reference to the moral character of God, the Bible, and Christianity.

JAMES N. BETHUNE.

WARRENTON, VIRGINIA.

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